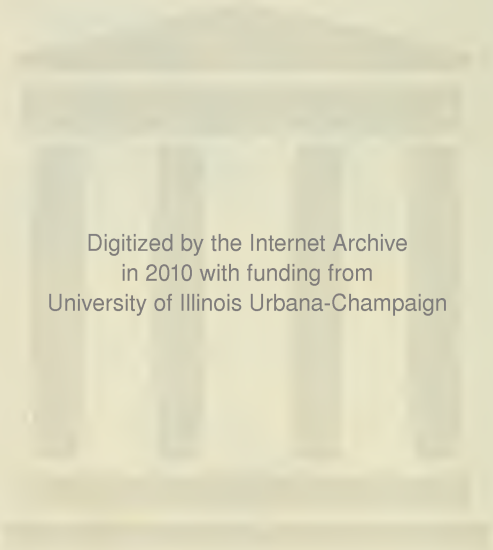


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THE
SMUGGLERS,
A TALE,
DESCRIPTIVE OF THE
SEA-COAST MANNERS
OF
SCOTLAND.

~~~~~  
IN THREE VOLUMES.  
~~~~~

VOL. III.

“ In days o’ yore I could my livin’ prize,
Nor fash’d wi’ dolefu’ gaugers or excise ;
But now-a-days we’re blythe to lear the thrift,
Our heads ’boon licence an’ excise to lift.”

FERGUSON.

EDINBURGH :
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THE SMUGGLERS.

CHAPTER I.

I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love or jealousy.

OTHELLO.

NEXT morning Captain Bruce went to Miss Stewart's lodgings, in the hope of finding her alone, as he could not at all satisfactorily account for her intimacy with Beaton, which had every appearance of something beyond a mere watering-place acquaintance, and fully determined, if possible, to arrive at some certainty upon the

subject. When he came to the house the door was shut, and he saw none of the children around it playing as they used, or coming running to welcome him on his approach. He thought he perceived an unusual stillness about the premisses, and though not very much given to any superstitious forebodings, he felt himself uncommonly disposed to be sad, and passed and repassed the door repeatedly, before he could muster up sufficient courage to knock. When at last he did so, he thought even the sound of the knocker in the empty passage had an ominous reverberation. He waited, no person appeared. He knocked again, the tardy footsteps of the person coming to open the door were forerunners of evil; and he was standing, prepared for bad tidings, when the door was opened, and Miss Stewart herself appeared in her morning dress.

“I beg pardon,” said she, when she perceived Captain Bruce, “for allowing you

to wait so long, but all our folks have gone to bathe, and I did not think of detaining a servant, as we are seldom honoured with visits so early in the day."

The Captain was relieved from the necessity of making any reply, by the opportune appearance of Mrs Grierson and her children, returning from bathing. She immediately addressed him.

"Captain, you have not breakfasted? you know there's no ceremony at sea-quarters, —walk in."

Bruce, whose mind was too much occupied with other subjects, had never adverted to the early hour at which he had paid his visit, till he observed Miss Stewart in an undress, made no apology, though he previously breakfasted, but walked in with the ladies.

Mrs Grierson was a frank hearty widow, between thirty and forty years of age, who had been young married to a gentleman possessing a "small pro-

perty" in the neighbourhood, but who had died lately, leaving her in easy circumstances, with two girls. With the best inclination in the world to entertain her friends and acquaintances, she often, by her strenuous efforts to please, produced sensations very little allied to pleasure. Possessed of no very delicate feelings, she could stand a good rough joke herself, but she took at the same time an unmerciful liberty of speech with others; for, as she meant no harm, she was not always attentive to distinguish those whose temperaments were not formed for relishing her robust humour.

At breakfast Captain Bruce, who felt little inclination to eat, after attempting once or twice to convince the lady that he had really breakfasted before he came, sat crumpling rather than eating a small roll which she had forced him to lay on the table beside him, was the first object of Mrs Grierson's attacks. And as love and marriage were the unfailing topics on which

she generally expatiated on such occasions, she rallied him with great fluency on the effects of the tender passion in subduing the grosser appetites.

Capt. Bruce, who did not feel very comfortable in these matters, attempted sometimes to change the subject, and sometimes to reply; but the lady was invincible, and increased in volubility of tongue and triumphant laughter, as she saw him anxious to evade her attacks, till she completely silenced the feeble opposition of her antagonist. Then, not satisfied with one victory, she turned to Miss Stewart, who had scarcely paid more respect to the eatables than Captain Bruce, and asked her ironically, "If she, too, had breakfasted before."

Miss Stewart complained of headach.

"That's a very convenient complaint, Miss Stewart; but young ladies are like young gentlemen in love, they are like nobody else. I don't believe, for this week

past, you have eat as much as would have kept a sparrow alive. My dear, you must attend a little better to yourself, or I shall never be able to answer to Mrs Comyns for you ; instead of getting better at the sea-side, you are getting worse and worse. I declare I must desire Dr Winram to interdict the visits of that Mr Beaton, or tell him that he may discontinue his own."

Miss Stewart, whose face crimsoned over at this attack, was unable to reply ; and had she, it would have been to no purpose, for Mrs Grierson, without paying any attention to the expression of Miss Stewart's face, addressing herself to the Captain, who eyed her with a look of particular amazement, continued :

" You cannot think, Mr Bruce, how I am perplexed with this very modest retired young lady, who visits no where, and who can with great difficulty be dragged to Mrs Winram's, if there be any company there. She allows this Mr Beaton to

visit at all hours, and almost every day he accompanies her in her solitary walks. I was, I must confess, a little astonished at her fondness for these solitary walks among the rocks, till I found out the meaning of her favourite phrase,

“To be alone,——that is not always solitude.”

And then, this morning, she remained at home to enjoy solitude, and the first thing I beheld on my return was her military beau. Pray, are you fond of solitude, Captain Bruce?”

“I assure you, Madam, my being here so early was entirely owing to a mistake.”

“Mr Grierson, when he was courting me, used to make many of these kind of mistakes.”

“Do you ever, my dear, (to Miss Stewart), meet any body by *pure accident*? I have known such things, in my day, happen young ladies.”

“I can only say,” replied Miss Stewart,

who had recovered herself during the attack upon Mr Bruce, "that the honour of the Captain's company was wholly unexpected by me, else I should not have allowed the maids to go to the shore this morning."

"They told me that you *desired* them!"

This retort produced no reply. All parties seeming to consider the subject exhausted, dropped the conversation by mutual consent.

During the pause, the attention of each was apparently directed to different objects. The pattern of the carpet attracted the profound admiration of Miss Stewart. Captain Bruce was completely wrapped in a brown study upon the merits of a cairngorum, when Mrs Grierson, who had been alternately eyeing the one and the other, finished the syncope by exclaiming,

"Connoisseurs may admire as much as they like, for me, their Venus de Medicis, or their Apollo Belvideres, but I would not give two handsome statues of Scottish flesh

and blood, such as I have just been admiring this half hour, for all the marble Italy can boast of. Silence and Solitude ! Aren't they twin sisters in the poet's kalendar, or brother and sister."

She was proceeding in this strain, in an ecstasy at her own wit, and might have continued to torment the unfortunate couple, who were both extremely grave upon the occasion. But the servant girl interrupted her merriment, by informing Captain Bruce that one of the soldiers who had been in search of him, was standing at the door. And he, very glad to get relieved, took his departure, cursing in his heart the impertinent vivacity of Mrs Grierson, which, while it added new fuel to his suspicions, prevented him at this time from getting at any explanation. And in the embarrassment which the rudeness of Mrs Grierson had occasioned to Miss Stewart, he conjectured that he could discover an alienation of attachment, which he attributed entirely

to her new affection for Beaton, which Mrs Grierson's remarks had now greatly tended to confirm him in the belief of. The soldier informed him that an express had arrived from Edinburgh, and was waiting at M'Bain's, but he did not think that it was upon any regimental business. The Captain, who could not divine whence any other necessity for sending him an express should arise, hastened to the inn, where the messenger waited him with a letter. This he found to be from his father, telling him of his arrival in Edinburgh, and desiring him to come to town immediately, as his presence was indispensably necessary upon a business of the utmost importance. He was very unwilling to leave Edinmouth without an interview with Miss Stewart, in which he might have got his mind set at rest; for the more he reflected upon the situation in which he first saw Mr Beaton and Miss Stewart, on the remark of the maid, and the observations of Mrs Grierson, the

more he became convinced that Beaton had supplanted him, and the more was he anxious to ascertain what he dreaded. But the urgency of his father's letter did not admit of delay, and he did not expect to be detained beyond a few days. So, leaving his troop in charge of the next in command, he ordered his horse, and having easily obtained leave of absence from the Colonel, he set out to meet his father.

CHAPTER II.

No! we must altogether to the route.

THE WONDER.

As soon as he had gone away, Miss Stewart left the room to indulge by herself in reflecting on the strangeness of her two last meetings with Mr Bruce, in both of which she observed that he was considerably agitated; and particularly, in the last she saw that he was much afflicted with the raillery of Mrs Grierson, especially upon her mentioning the name of Beaton; and conjoining this with the attitude in which he had caught Mr Beaton and herself the evening before, she perceived in his silence, and in the solemnity of his countenance, when he took leave, marks of dissatisfaction, which she did not

hesitate to attribute to jealousy, and was vexed that he had not remained, that she might have had an opportunity given her of explaining; and yet how she could have explained was as difficult for her to perceive; this would have laid her under the necessity of disclosing circumstances in her family history, which she did not feel authorised to do in the situation in which she stood with Captain Bruce, and which, besides, without her mother's approbation, she was not at liberty to mention. "But why should I perplex myself," said she rising, "it is time enough for me to think of what explanation it will be proper for me to give when I am asked to give one; perhaps, after all, my conduct may not be of such consequence to Mr Bruce as to ever give him a moment's uneasiness."

This, however, was but a momentary thought, to which she would not allow herself to give encouragement, and had

again begun to ruminate upon the line of conduct she should adopt with regard to Captain Bruce ; the idea of forfeiting his esteem, and of giving him reason to believe her culpable of acting a double part, was beyond measure distressing. But how to avoid it without compromising her duty, she could not perceive. She was deploring the difficulties she could not solve, when one of Mrs Grierson's little girls came and rapped at her chamber door, to inform her that Mrs Winram had come with a quantity of lovely shells for their grotto, which she wished her to look at. Miss Stewart told her she would follow.

On going down stairs she found the Doctor's lady assorting the little shells she had brought, and extolling and admiring the half finished grotto at which they had been working.

“ Now, if this grotto were finished, and had just a hermit in it, it would be the handsomest thing of the kind imagina-

ble ; or a Chinese figure—a Mandarin would be charming.”

“ Ah! mamma,” said one of the girls, “ wouldn’t my wax Babes in the Wood look pretty just along the middle.”

“ No,” replied her sister, “ my Gipsy Girl would look better, and then it’s so like that little lady that told us our fortunes out of the cups at Mrs Winram’s.”

“ Pray Mrs Winram,” said Miss Stewart laughing, “ who is this famous cup-reader who runs so much in these girls’ heads; they have been talking about her constantly since that night they drank tea with you?”

“ Dear me, don’t you know Miss Spelding? I thought every lady within twenty miles had heard of Miss Spelding; she visits in some of the genteel families in the country, and has astonishing skill in reading cups; that is, she pretends to it; for my own part, I have no faith in any of these things, they are so ridiculous; but I have heard some very curious stories of her read-

ings, which I am at a loss to account for. She——”

“ I can tell,” said Mrs Grierson, interrupting her, “ I can tell you twenty stories to the same effect ; there was Captain Bray’s marriage”

“ But you don’t mean to say that she found out these secrets in the bottom of tea cups ?”

“ Oh ! no, not at all : I only mean to say, that they are very strange ; and you know she often visits Lady *Holly* and Miss *Whin*, and Sir James ; who, although they don’t give any credit to her being possessed of any supernatural power are yet astonished at some of her predictions as well as I.”

“ I don’t think there’s any thing strange in it at all—she is so well acquainted with all the families in the neighbourhood, and has known their whole histories for these two generations, that it would be very strange if she did *not* hit right sometimes in the course of her extensive practice in the art and mystery of cup-reading and

match-making; and when she does so, these are remembered and told over and over again; whereas, her failures, which must at least be ten to one, are laughed at and forgotten; and then, as to her being received at Lady Holly's, and employed by her in the exercise of her calling, I am not quite so certain as you appear to be, that her ladyship is an infidel in that respect, although she affects to laugh at Miss Spelding's interpretations; for I do not always give people credit for despising what they report with wonder, even although they tell me, they do not believe what they are telling. Now, you'll observe, that the greater part of her predictions consist in promising advantageous matches to young ladies."

"And sometimes to widows," said Mrs Winram, looking sly.

"Ay, and likewise to those who wish to be widows," replied Mrs Grierson, and proceeded with great indifference, address-

ing herself to Miss Stewart; “ that, you know, my dear, is what young ladies have a great propensity to believe may be the case; and at any rate, they like to be told about them. And though they may not rank as absolute believers, yet the idea is far from improbable, that they have a kind of hesitating faith. When Miss Jones was reading her cousin’s marriage with Sir George in the list of marriages t’other night, in your house, Mrs Winram, didn’t you observe something significant in her observing, ‘ Well, that’s very strange; Miss Spelding, upwards of six months ago, read it in her cup at my aunt’s?’ The truth is, it was only six weeks since Miss Spelding drank tea with the lady, and the rumour of her marriage with Sir George had been current for six months. She chose to forget the report of the country, and only recommended Miss Spelding’s predictions on purpose to laugh at them; yet that very night, don’t you recollect, she was among the

first that put her cup into the sybil's hand, and laughed "most consumedly" when told there was a carriage in the bottom; yet she repeated, at least a dozen of times, 'what an absurdity it was to give credit to such nonsense;' and then she remarked next moment, 'that it was very droll; there really was something like a coach among the leaves.'"

"But you have not told me yet who this lady is, Mrs Winram."

"I know her from common report, and her occasional visits to us in the summer season; but Mrs Grierson seems so much better acquainted with her than I am, that I shall leave that task to her."

"The task is not very difficult," replied Mrs Grierson. "She is a virgin who has passed that period of life, when ladies of consideration drop the title of Miss, and assume that of Mrs; and who, dropping wisely the manners of a girl with the name, acquire a superior claim to the re-

spect and attention of those who are themselves respectable, by showing that a woman may be both *independent*, useful, and amiable, without being married. But this requires an attention in early life to something else than superficial acquirements; and perhaps, my dear Maria, it even requires a little taste of affliction in early life to form such characters, for they are very rare. Miss Spelding is not one of them. Her father educated her for a sphere which nature never intended she should fill; and he, honest man, had not the means to make up the deficiency—for he lived wholly up to his income, and left her poor and dependent upon a distant relation, who, after having exhausted every lawful endeavour to get her honourably off his hands, was just upon the point of turning her to his door, when, most providentially, a distant relation left her a small legacy, which is barely sufficient to keep her soul and body together with

good management; but she can play a little upon the Piano Forte, and can adjust a cap or bonnet, or alter the hemming of a gown, and is the best match-maker in the whole country—at least, she has the reputation, though she has never succeeded in finding a helpmate for herself. And this is certain, she has always the earliest intelligence upon that and all other family arrangements which are going forward, either for the honour of her sex, or otherwise; by which means, to those who must have such news, she is as necessary, and somewhat cheaper, than a common newspaper. To all this she is an expounder of riddles, an interpreter of dreams, a reader of cups, and a decypherer of such secret notices as the dead-match, or letter-spark, at a candle, the soot pendulums at a winter's fire, or any similar occupations which amuse our solitary dowagers, and render her visits as welcome to them as it is necessary for her, to enable her to make the

two ends of her income meet. Now, my dear Miss Stewart, you have all the information I can give you upon this important subject; and you might have had it long ago, had I thought you were in the smallest degree interested, or that you had not known Miss Spelding; but I believe she never visits Mrs Comyns."

"No," said Mrs Winram, "she has never visited there since she foretold the death of her son George; now I shall tell you how this happened, and Mrs Grierson, as you have accounted so satisfactorily for her knack at foretelling marriages, you may perhaps be as able to account for the circumstance of her telling Mrs Comyns that she was to receive the account of her son's death on the very day after she had received a letter from him, informing her of his being in health and of his promotion. A party of Mrs Comyn's friends, chiefly young people, had been invited to Bowerbank to pass that day with Mrs Comyns, in consequence of the good news she had

just received from her son, who was then in America; and after tea, when they had been ridiculing and laughing at Miss Spelding's skill in fortune-telling, Mr Hay, who told me himself, and who is still living, and who can vouch for the truth of the story, had been remarkably severe upon Miss Spelding, as hard as Mrs Grierson has been upon me. When the servant was carrying off the tea-tray, he took a cup at random out of it, and handing it to Miss Spelding, sarcastically asked her to tell the person's fortune to whom that cup belonged; she looked into it, and returned it to him again, with a very grave look, but without saying a word. "No, no, Madam," said he, "you shall not get off so, you must tell us what you have seen." She begged that he would not insist, but this made him the more urgent, and the whole company joining, she became still more grave, and repeatedly intreated them to desist, but this still increased their desire to hear; and after much intreaty, she told

them, that the person who had last drunk out of that cup would soon receive the news of the sudden death of a near and much beloved relation in a distant land. The whole company were silent except Mr Hay, who attempted to turn it off with a laugh, by saying, if I had thought you were to give us no better than that, I should have let you keep them ; but I beg to inform you, your prediction need give yourself or the company no uneasiness, for I drunk out of the cup last, and I have no relations abroad that I care about.” “ You did not drink out of the cup last,” said Miss Spelding solemnly. “ Why then I’ll do it now,” said he, “ still endeavouring to make a jest of the whole ; but a young lady in company, who had a brother in the army, insisted that the tray should be replaced on the table, and the cups examined, to see to whom the fatal one belonged. “ I shall know mine,” said she, “ from the uncommon old-fashioned tea spoon I had in it, and I think I see it re-

remaining in the saucer from whence you took the cup."

"There were two of the same kind put down," said Mrs Comyns, "they belonged to my husband's father."

"But mine had a twist in it," said Miss —. "Oh this is not it."

"Then I had the other," replied Mrs Comyns.

The assemblage, as may be easily imagined, were very much disconcerted at the circumstance, and tried to reason Mrs Comyns into better spirits, by reminding her of her having, just the day before, received accounts from her son that he was in health, and in prosperous circumstances; that he had said there was no appearance of a battle; and that, if every foolish surmise were to disturb our peace when our friends were absent or in danger, we should never be happy; but all was of no avail, the company soon separated, and left her quite dejected, themselves quite angry at

Miss Spelding; but what was their astonishment, when the very next post brought an account of a battle and the Colonel's death! the first letter having been long detained on the passage, and the last having flown fast, like all bad tidings. Now, Madam, whether you set me down as a believer in her supernatural powers or not, I must say, that I was astonished at this story when I heard it, and still I am at a loss to account for the striking and unfortunate coincidence. "Oh," said Mrs Grierson, "it must have been mere chance-work; there were several people present connected with the army, whose relations were exposed in an unhealthy climate, and she hazarded little in throwing out a general prediction of that kind; in similar circumstances, I could utter such a prediction myself, with almost a certainty of its being fulfilled."

"But you could not fix upon a particular cup that any person had been drinking out of."

“ Neither did she, I dare say ; if she had thought the cup could have been traced to any individual, much more that it would be traced to Mrs Comyns, she would have uttered no prediction ; but she had trusted to the general nature of the prediction, and the little probability there was of the cup finding an owner, which it would not have done, but for the two old-fashioned spoons, and that was a circumstance which she was not to know.”

“ But,” said Miss Stewart, “ you remarked that she always prophesied agreeable things ; surely this was none of her agreeable predictions ?”

“ It’s the only one I ever heard of an opposite description uttered by her,” answered Mrs Grierson, “ and she must have done it in order to be revenged on the company for ridiculing her art, and they did deserve some punishment—though every body was sorry it fell upon Mrs Comyns with such severity—for their folly in urging the woman

to say something, in order to support her character."

"And it has had very great effect in the country in this respect," said Mrs Winram.

"Yes, among the vulgar," said Mrs Grierson, and had she lived a century ago, she would have run a great chance of being burned for a witch, and immortalized along with Major Weir and his sister, in Satan's Invisible World."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs Grierson, but there are a number of those who cannot be ranked among the vulgar, who think there is something unaccountable in the thing turning out exactly as Miss Spelding said; and the circumstance of the spoon in bringing home the prediction to Mrs Comyns—Mrs Comyns herself can never forget it."

"That Mrs Comyns should never forget the death of an only son," replied the lady, "is not very wonderful, and therefore she must be set aside when we speak lightly on

the subject, but there is a great vulgar as well as a low, and I have known some of the "genteel folk in the county," gaping with as much booby wonder over ridiculous stories, as any of the children here at the sailor boy's tale of Sea Serpents a mile long, and Kraakins as large as the Isle of May; but pray what account does she give of it herself, I am told she affects a mysterious way of speaking about it?"

"She told me frankly enough, that the impression came so irresistibly upon her, that she could not help doing as she did; and she always laments the circumstance as the cause of Mrs Comyns's avoiding her company, though in every other way the story has been of no disadvantage to her. But this introduction of fortune-telling has been rather inopportune; it has prevented me from requesting the favour of Miss Stewart's and your company to a small party which I am to have before the Light horse leave this, which I am told will be soon; I had hoped

they would have remained some time with us.—Pray when did you see Captain Bruce? the Doctor sent him a card, and I expect he will make one; I should have sent you a note, but I know you do not stand upon ceremony, and therefore I chose to be the messenger myself—to-morrow evening I shall expect you.”

“Do you choose to go, Miss Stewart,” said Mrs Grierson, “or would you rather enjoy your beloved solitude?”

Miss Stewart smiled, and replied, “She would with pleasure accompany Mrs Grierson to Mrs Winram’s.”

CHAPTER III.

In truth, I like those decorations well.

——— And here, my love,
The gay profusion of a woman's fancy
Is well displayed.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

ON the evening appointed, Mrs Grierson, accompanied by Miss Stewart, set out for Mrs Winram's; "we shall see the Doctor's lady's route," said Mrs Grierson as they went along. "Well, to be a woman of some small portion of sense, she is the strangest being I am acquainted with. I wish she may have asked some of the high Dons, as they are styled, to be there; her absurdity never shines with such glorious splendour, as when she wishes to show off before some of "the genteelest folk in the county." As for us common people, when we alone hap-

pen to be present, she condescends, in compassion to our humble understandings, to appear tolerably rational, and might probably succeed in being considered an elegant and entertaining companion, would she only be content not to ask more; but I never saw a handsome girl who got married to an old rich doating fool, who ever turned out better; they are the most ridiculously expensive toys that ever any wretch meddled with. Mrs Hay is positively more agreeable in a large company, rough though she be, for she is unaffectedly vulgar, and that to me is a thousand times more pleasant than Mrs Dr Winram's elegant entertainments. I wonder she ever asks me to come to any of them; I am certain I have told her twenty times about them; there is never a season passes over without a quarrel betwixt us upon this point, for with all her foibles, I cannot help liking her, and endeavouring to put her to rights when I see her acting so foolishly,

for she takes it always in good part, and seems sensible of my kindness, though she does not much profit by it."

"She is certainly very much indebted to you," said Miss Stewart ironically, "for your kindness; but there are others who are not under much less obligations, who may perhaps appear ungrateful, as they have never made any acknowledgements, and have acted as you wonder Mrs Winram never has—they have avoided you."

"You mean Mr Beaton and Captain Bruce.—Comfort yourself, my dear, you'll see them both to-night, but don't think I drove them away; they have too much good sense to heed what an old woman like me would say. I rather doubt you have been playing the coquet yourself, for——"

"I am not thinking any thing about either of them," said Miss Stewart interrupting her, "and I must request, Mrs Grierson, that you will not in future allow yourself to sport so much upon that subject; you might have

perceived, that such a frequent recurrence to the same topic, is neither consistent with delicacy nor good breeding ; it is what I cannot suffer."

Miss Stewart said this with an air which shewed that she was both displeased and decided ; but she had gone a step rather beyond the truth, when she said she was thinking on neither Mr Beaton nor Captain Bruce, for they were the very two persons upon whom she had been thinking, and whom she meant by her remark as those who avoided Mrs Grierson, for Mr Beaton had been absent two days, Captain Bruce had not repeated his visit, and she had unfortunately been accusing herself of the very crime which Mrs Grierson had alleged as the cause of their absence, at least as far as appearances went with respect to Captain Bruce ; and his not having repeated his visit, though lying in the same village, seemed only accounted for on this supposition, as she did not know of any other cause.

“ Had I supposed you would have taken the thing so seriously,” said Mrs Grierson, “ I should not have made any remark about it ; or had it ever entered into my mind that you would have considered it otherwise than as a joke, and as I meant it, I should have held my peace.”

“ I dare say you meant it as a joke, but jests, when too often repeated, become “ stale and unprofitable.”

“ But not always “ flat,” I perceive.”

“ No, their acidity may preserve them from that.”

“ I would advise you not to make wry faces, and shew that this acidity hurts you, otherwise you may lead people to suppose there is a reality where there is none.”

They were now within sight of the Doctor's, and were espied by Mrs Winram, who stood at one of the windows, in conversation with Mr Ainslie. As soon as they were within reach of a bow, she made an inclination of the head towards them, ob-

serving to Ainslie, " There comes Mrs Grierson along with Miss Stewart. I cannot bear that woman. She might easily have perceived, by the manner in which I asked her, that a refusal would have been more acceptable than a compliance with my invitation. She always destroys the pleasure of any company where she is, by the rudeness of her repartees, which she thinks wit, and the rudeness of her attacks, which she calls speaking the truth. I never saw it happen better. Captain Bruce, whom I wished particularly to be here, has sent an apology, and she, whom I did not wish, and indeed did not expect, makes her appearance among the first."

" That should teach you, my dear Madam," replied Mr Ainslie, " to invite no person whom you do not wish to come, for I have frequently observed, that, stay away from an entertainment who may, those who have been invited upon the faith

of their not coming, have never been the persons."

"So have I; but I could not be off asking her, as I wished particularly to have Miss Stewart, and I could not ask the one without the other. And, besides, she had previously told me that she hated all parties of the kind, and the last I had she did not attend." Here the entrance of the ladies themselves put an end to the conversation, and Mrs Winram welcomed Mrs Grierson with an apparent cordiality, as admirably supported as if she had been bred and practised for years in the first circles of any of the metropolises of England, Scotland, or Ireland. Miss Stewart was received by the Doctor with more sincerity, and learned from Mr Ainslie, that Captain Bruce had left the village for Edinburgh, a piece of information which set her at ease with regard to the cause of his absence, and took away some of the soreness which she had felt at Mrs Grierson's remarks.

The company soon began to collect, and Mrs Winram had the supreme felicity of seeing her small parlour as exquisitely packed, and her guests as gloriously squeezed, and as truly uncomfortable, as if she could have boasted of a coronet, or had had a dozen liveried lacquies to have added to the confusion.

After doing penance for upwards of an hour in this tea-room, which Mrs Grierson compared to the Black-Hole of Calcutta, their ears were at length regaled with that most charming of all preludes, two country fiddlers tuning their violins, and an unto-ward bass grunting approbation. At length, the notes of preparation ended, the sturdy musicians, drawing their bows across the strings with a strength of arm which might have done honour to Gow's Band, made the whole house resound, and conveyed the welcome intelligence that all was ready for the dancers.

The lady of the house, squired by Mr

Ainslie, led the way. Miss Stewart, attended by Mr Beaton, followed, and after them came Mrs Grierson and Mr Henry Martin. Then a number of the fashionables who were down at the sea-side, but who do not require any very particular enumeration, rushed *en masse*, without any distinction of rank, to the spacious ball-room.

“Merciful heavens!” exclaimed Mrs Grierson, as she entered, “this is beyond every thing, this is the true heroic! Mr Martin, you were at some of her former fetes?” “I was at two, Ma’am.” “What do you think of this?” “I think,” replied Martin, “that Dryden’s lines on Milton might, with a little paring down, be made to suit:

“Two fetes two great occasions did adorn,
The first our pity claimed, the next our scorn;
Folly exhausted could no farther go,
To make a third, she join’d the other two.”

Mrs Winram, as the reader has been

already informed, had a number of small parties occasionally. But towards the conclusion of the bathing-season she gave one or two galas to the visitors at Edinmouth, the greater part of whom were her husband's customers, from his being the only medical practitioner in the place, and her visitors, as her inclination as well as her duty made her assiduous in her attention to strangers. On this occasion all the spare officers of the — Regiment were put in requisition. A number of the country gentlemen and their ladies were invited, along with the Collector, and a few of the chief men of Edinmouth.

In order to accommodate such an assemblage, Mrs Winram had thrown two rooms, a bed-room and drawing-room, into one; and a closet, which stood somewhat awkwardly at the top, not being removeable, because, like the Prophet's chamber, it was built upon the wall, she converted into an hermitage, fancifully decorated with rustic

ornaments. And here a servant, habited like a hermit, with crucifix and rosary, waited to refresh the weary pilgrims with cooling lemonade from a crystal fountain, and confects, in the shape of crusts, from a scrip which hung by his side.

The ball-room was tastefully decked out with flowers, and splendidly illuminated by one immense chandelier of cut crystal, hung in the middle, whose brilliance rendered any subsidiary lights unnecessary; this being the only one in the town, belonged of right to the large public-room at Enæas M'Bain's, for which it had been bought by subscription;—but it had never been lighted up before, and was on this night to be exhibited for the first time by special permission, in order to give it fair play. To avoid any accident, as the night was exceedingly tempestuous, the windows were shut. Every crevice by which any air could be admitted was carefully closed, so that, like the Greenlanders

lamps, it not only illuminated, but warmed; or, to use a more sublime simile, it was like the sun, the source at once of light and heat. This radiant caloric, however, added to the natural exhalations arising from so many human bodies in a state of constant motion, produced some disagreeable sensations on the delicate nerves of the tender uninitiated girls. And just about the "turn of the night," when the floor was peopled with young and old, disrobed of every unnecessary article of dress from the breast upward, crossing, and reeling, and setting, suppling their limbs like so many Laplanders in a stove-bath, one young lady, albeit unaccustomed to the melting mood, was so overcome with the heat, that she fainted, and fell back upon her chair. The cry was immediately given, and some ran for water, others for the Doctor, who was busily engaged at cards in the parlour below, with the Collector and a few aged dowagers.

In the midst of the bustle, Mr Beaton pulled down one window, and Mrs Grierson at the same time pulled down another exactly opposite. The wind rushed in at the rectilinear apertures with prodigious force, and, as if by magic, upsetting the chandelier, extinguished the lights in a moment. A universal scream from the ladies, at being thus left in total darkness, was immediately followed by a rush to the door. The door unfortunately opened inward, and had been shut in the first moment of confusion. Not one could get out. And, to add to the consternation, the hermit, who had stepped upon a stool, and was roaring out, "No danger," losing his equilibrium, in his endeavours to save himself caught hold of the shrubbery, and brought altogether down, with a tremendous crash.

The Doctor and his company, on the first alarm, had left their game, and reached the landing-place on the stair, but could gain no admittance, till, by the stre-

nuous efforts of those within, who were least alarmed, as much order had been restored as allowed the door to be left free. When the door was opened, and lights brought, the young lady, whose unlucky illness had been the original cause of all the uproar, had so far recovered, either by the entrance of the air or the exclusion of the Doctor, that she was one of the few who had suffered but little, and who appeared to enjoy the scene before her, in which the severe gravity of the personages contributed not a little to give exquisite effect to situations in themselves sufficiently ridiculous.

First in prominence was the mistress, running from one corner to another alternately, deploring the general wreck, and condoling with individual misfortune. Next stood the poor hermit, bending ruefully over his demolished cell, and endeavouring to extricate himself from the ruins. Here was one lady in pursuit of

her shawl, and another exhibiting her torn neck handkerchief. There was one demonstrating how the accident happened, to a person equally vociferous in proving that it could not be occasioned by the wind. In this corner the voice of lamentation was heard over a tattered gown :—in that a fine lace trimming was the subject of regret. “ I can never put this cap upon my head again,” was the passionate answer of one mourner to her fellow, who was anxiously inquiring after the fragment of a necklace which had burst in as many parts as there were pearls. Here was a gentleman sedately viewing a fashionable coat unexpectedly transformed into a spencer; and beside him his companion equally engaged in contemplating both the lapels of his own attached to one side, it having been opened in the hurry, without any regard paid to buttons or button-holes. And, last of all, the Doctor himself, like a perturbed spirit, wringing his hands, and

with tears in his eyes, went about expressing to every one the great pleasure he felt in thinking that no serious accident had taken place.

It was in vain that Mrs Winram, when the extent of the damage had been ascertained, pronounced it of little consequence, and endeavoured to persuade the company to resume their amusements, "as the chandelier would be relighted in no time."

"Thank God for this escape," said Mrs Grierson, "and don't tempt Providence any further."

They found sufficient employment in collecting and assorting the scattered habiliments, and in preparing to face the storm, which was a task both of time and difficulty, some of the young ladies' residences being not less than a mile distant. "I never was so much disappointed in my life," said the Doctor, as he was bidding Mrs Grierson and Miss Stewart good-night.

“ I believe you,” answered Mrs Grier-son, “ our limbs have been most miracu-
lously preserved ; but be comforted, your
lady, with the aid of such a night as this,
has provided business both for yourself
and the sexton.”

“ These evening amusements have been
blessed inventions for both professions,” said
Mr Beaton.

CHAP. IV.

Once I loved, oh ! so sincerely !
I shall never love again.——LEWIS.

To return to the inhabitants of Bowerbank. Mrs Comyns, in compliance with her promise, presented Miss Bruce with the correspondence of her son. Miss Bruce, taking the packet to her own room to examine the contents, bade Mrs Comyns good-bye for the evening. The following morning she began early, and before breakfast she had finished the perusal. The first letter was from Paris; we shall transcribe a few of them as they were numbered, omitting such as are not necessary to elucidate the story. They are inserted not according to their dates, but according to the series of time at which they were received.

No. 1.

George Comyns, Esq. to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

When I wrote you last, I led you to expect that my next would be dated from some part in England, but here I am still, and here I shall probably remain for a few days longer. I had made, as I supposed, my farewell visit to my banker, and should have set out next day, but I got introduced there to a very agreeable family, a countryman's, who have insisted upon my spending a few days with them at their house at St Germain, a short distance from Paris, to which I consented, as probably I may never again have any opportunity of seeing them; and I feel a kindness for them, which arises from their amiable manners, and their misfortunes; their name is Stew-

art; the father bears the rank of colonel in the French service; he served the young Pretender, and escaped after the battle of Culloden to this country. He has a son a captain in the French army, who is at Paris at present upon some military business; as he never knew Scotland, and was educated at one of the royal military establishments; along with his father's prejudice against our royal family, he has adopted the French antipathy against our country; he is otherwise a very agreeable young man—somewhat volatile—but he is not much at his father's. He has also a daughter, the loveliest girl I ever beheld, of the most fascinating manners; she is quite Scotch, with a little dash of French *gaite* about her, but it is the *gaite de cœur*, it is the unconstrained cheerfulness of conscious innocence. How often, since I saw her, have I wished that you could spend a season at St Germain, or this sweet girl a summer at Bowerbank; but don't think, for all this,

that I am in love. In a short time, you know, I must leave France, and I shall not leave it the less cheerfully for complying with the request of a family which you would have seconded yourself, had you been acquainted with them. I am, my dear Mother, your affectionate Son.

No. 2.

DEAR MOTHER, *St Germain's.*

I have just arrived here. I am happy that I did remain; I should have missed much gratification if I had not; the old gentleman is entertaining and sprightly, but the remembrance of his native land sometimes casts a gloom over his countenance; and his circumstances are rather embarrassed, as I have been informed, from the necessity he is under of supporting in a superior style his son, who is attached to one of the most expensive regiments in the French service,

the majority of the officers being *noblesse*. But this is what I should never have discovered in the family, they contrive to keep up appearances so well. Mary (the daughter's name) is always simply elegant, and her liveliness dissipates the slight shades of melancholy which her father at times cannot help indulging. The other day, as we were walking in the wood of St Germain, and our conversation turned, as it almost constantly does when we are alone together, he said to me, "Notwithstanding the number of years I have been absent from Scotland, I can never think of my native land without a sigh, yet hundreds of my countrymen are worse situated than I am; and could I forget Caledonia, I might perhaps be happy; but the thought of being an exile, and not sleeping in the sepulchres of my fathers, at times overcomes me to weakness. When I hear you talking, with the pleasure so natural, and which I myself have felt, of returning home, I feel some-

what of envy. Always when I wish any of my countrymen a good journey, how I wish I could go along with them ;—but I must die in a foreign land. Oh ! Mr Comyns, I should never have left my country—it was cowardly to fly, yet there was no hope ; the cruel Cumberland did not spare even submission.” When he touches upon this topic, I generally wave the subject ; but a thought occurred to me during the time he spoke, with your concurrence, I should like to give the Colonel an invitation to revisit Scotland along with me. There can be no danger now, and a way might be easily fallen upon to lessen the expence to him, without hurting his feelings. I shall wait your answer.

No. 3.

St Germain's.

I am still here ; time runs on so softly, that I hardly think a day begun ere it is

ended. The village is beautifully situated upon a hill, at the foot of which flows the Seine ; the houses are high and well built, and the streets open, and even elegant. There are here a number of large hotels, which were formerly occupied by the nobles during the time the Court visited the Château ; we reside in one of them, not far from it, and have the liberty of amusing ourselves in the gardens, which stretch along the declivity of the hill, towards the Seine, supported upon elevated terraces, and laid out with great taste. This generally is the place we choose for our walks, unless when the old gentleman and myself extend our excursions into the forest.

Our range of society is not extensive, and consists chiefly of the exiles or their descendants ; but to me the chief charm is in the house and pleasure-ground.

We read, and Miss Stewart plays upon an instrument, not very common in our

country, the harp, to which she is extremely partial, and which her father insists was once the national instrument of Scotland. As this is a point on which I am not very deeply read, I shall leave him to settle the controversy with our Hibernian friends; but when Miss Stewart touches it, I think any country might be proud to claim it. This forms part of our evening's amusement.

No. 4.

St Germain's.

I begin to feel, as the hour approaches when I should be preparing to leave this place, that my attachments here are stronger than I had suspected. In all my little rambles Mary Stewart has been my companion, and every day when I renew them, I feel more unwilling to believe that they must so soon terminate. I have deluded myself with a thousand excuses, by which I

have prolonged my stay ; but I can conceal from myself no longer, that she is the only and the real cause. If I may judge from the complacency with which she receives my attentions, I am not altogether indifferent to her ; and if I may judge from the indulgence you have ever shewn me, you will oppose no difficulties to my offering explicit proposals to a young lady to whom I am already bound by every honourable tie, except that of making her a direct offer of my hand and fortune, and this I only wait your consent to do. As you love me, my dear mother, let the next post bring me the intelligence that you consent to the only thing which can make your son happy.

Mr Comyns having received an answer from Scotland consonant to his wishes, set out for Paris in order to prepare every thing for his approaching nuptials, which were to be celebrated in a few days. Cap-

tain Stewart, Miss Stewart's brother, resided in Paris, and Mr Comyns intended to consult with him respecting some little arrangements; but that young gentleman was so much occupied with his other avocations, that he could only occasionally be seen by Mr Comyns. At length, however, the day was fixed, and every thing finally settled, when an unhappy turn was given to the whole business.

No. 5.

Paris.

I have only time, amid the whirl in which I am, to tell you that all is settled as I could wish; and that to-morrow evening I set out for St Germain. I hope my next will be dated from England. The happiest of men is, my dear Mother, your affectionate Son.

P.S. I cannot write more—I am giddy with felicity.

No. 6.

I had just finished and sent off a short note, and, wrapt up in the most delightful anticipations, I was indulging all the extacies of certain hope, and drawing largely upon futurity. I felt no inclination to sleep; and was surprised, when looking at my watch, I found it past three o'clock. I undressed, and was preparing to step into bed, when a noise like thunder, at the door of the Hotel, alarmed me. I put on my night-gown, and laying my hand upon my sword, (we have all swords here as an article of dress,) though I did not know why I should be alarmed, I stood upon the defensive, and listened. I heard my own name pronounced, with, "I must see him, were he in bed with his mistress." My valet endeavoured to prevent my being disturbed, and a scuffle ensued in the lobby. On hearing this, I stepped out of my chamber; and guess

my dismay when I perceived Stewart, my Mary's brother, without a hat, pale and haggard, struggling with my servant and the servants of the house. His face was the picture of despair, and, half-choaked with passion, he was muttering hoarsely incoherent curses, alternately in English and French. The efforts had apparently exhausted him, and he was sinking under the effects of his exertions, when his wild eye turned upon me.—With one horrid unnatural effort, and with a spasmodic energy of nerve, almost super-human, he dashed to the end of the room the persons who attempted to hold him—then rushing forward, he sprung into my arms, and clasping me round my neck, sobbed out, “My friend! I am happy;” and with an hysterical laugh, sunk insensible on my bosom.

I had him immediately carried to my chambers, and laid upon a sofa, and sent for a physician. When he arrived, Cap-

tain Stewart had recovered from his state of insensibility, and was tolerably composed, after a strong fit of weeping. Observing the Doctor, he said to me, "Dismiss all medical attendants, you alone can be my physician." The whole withdrew, and we were left together—when Charles, fixing his eye upon me, with dreadful expression, "You wish to be allied to our family—would you wish to be linked to infamy?" I know not how I looked; I cannot describe how I felt: A sudden mist came over my eyes—my limbs trembled and refused their office—the room went round; and I must have exhibited an appearance little better than his own.

"Your sister!" I exclaimed feebly—"Good God! what is it you say? infamy! can infamy be connected with——had any other than yourself her brother——" "It is that brother," muttered he, "who must involve her and his family in infamy, if ——" "If what," said I, interrupting him

—“If you do not prevent it,” he replied. “And can I prevent it?” “Yes!” “Then thank God, it does not involve her in any personal guilt!” and I felt relieved from a load of indescribable anguish—but it was the partial release of a wretch upon the rack, only to acquire a little strength, in order to undergo fresh torture.

We sat and looked at each other—I trembled in every fibre, expecting him to go on—he continued silent. At last, said I, “Tell me, I beseech you, if you can, your story coherently.” But that seemed impossible; all that I could learn was, that he had fled from justice, and sought refuge with me. I assured him of my protection, as far as it extended. Though not acquainted with our Ambassador, I said I would try to make interest to get introduced—if it was a pardonable crime, I had no doubt but, some way or other, I would get him relieved. I said every thing, and any thing, that I could think

of to soothe him; but he heard all with stupid death-like indifference. When I had exhausted every topic which presented itself, and was silent because I had no more to say, “Nothing under ten thousand *louis* can be of the least service to me!” he exclaimed; “I have murdered my father! Oh! my too, too, indulgent father! And my sister, how shall I face her! poor, ruined girl!” Then, turning quick round to me, “But you can save them, Comyns! and me! save us all from infamy!” Imagining him to be deranged, I begged him to go to bed, and try to get some rest, and in the morning I would see him. “Then you promise me the money? I knew you would save me.” I assured him I would do every thing in my power, provided he would only allow himself to be persuaded to try and get a little sleep; to which he consented, and I led him to a bed-room, while he repeated incessantly, “Recollect I depend upon you—I must not be

disappointed." I laid myself down, but sleep had now gone completely from me. I could think of nothing but the scene I had witnessed, and spent two or three restless hours in perplexing conjectures. Sometimes I thought him drunk; but then I recollected, that in his freest moments, I never saw any approach to intoxication. Then I thought him mad; and the idea of being allied to any family, so closely, in which there was derangement, I could not entertain it without horror. One moment I imagined he had committed murder; the next, that seemed unlikely, else he would have been pursued. At last I conceived it must be a debt of honour; yet the amount forbade that supposition; if so, it was impossible for me to do any thing in it. I arose early, extremely feverish, and walked gently to the room. Upon opening the door, I saw him in the most profound sleep, and retired without disturbing him; and have now written

thus far on purpose, if, by any means, I might get, at least, a momentary relief from my anxiety.

* * * * *

Stewart has just left me; it has turned out, as I expected, a debt of honour! and he has left me in a state of phrenzy, which makes me tremble for him. I know not how I almost tremble for myself—my fate is so linked with that family. I shall follow him; and when I return, I shall continue my narrative.

* * * * *

I have been at his lodging—he is not there. I take the opportunity of resuming my writing:—On returning from his room, I sat down, and began to ruminate. It struck me as somewhat strange, that at such a juncture his previous visits should have been so few, short, and hurried; for two days, indeed, I had not seen him at all. The sum he mentioned, which at first led me to doubt his

sanity, upon revolving it over, did not appear so strange. The infatuation (they call it enterprise) of gamesters, I have repeatedly witnessed in Paris; and all the young men of family who have no fortune, particularly the officers in such a Regiment as his, are professed gamesters. But his manner, which had startled me, appeared to carry in it more of finesse than reality; the abrupt mention of his father and sister; his sound sleep; even his very agitation, over-acted as I now began to think; all conspired to raise in my mind a crowd of confused surmisings, by no means favourable to Mr Stewart; which some stories my friend Walters threw in, respecting what he had heard of the art of the fraternity with whom he hinted Stewart was connected, did not tend either to lessen or silence. I therefore determined that I would not ruin myself on account of a gamester, if such he turned out to be, nor allow my feelings to destroy every ra-

tional prospect I had of happiness; and, by giving way to a momentary impulse, incur lasting misery, merely to avoid a little present pain. I had completely settled this point with myself, when he entered the room with a degree of careless ease, which confirmed my resolution. He began with apologizing for the disturbance he had occasioned last night—but he was thrown so entirely off his guard, and indeed so much deranged, that he hardly knew what he was doing, and he had no friend in whom he could repose so much confidence. He was proceeding with a great deal of nonchalance in this style, when I interrupted him, and requested that he would be plain with me, and inform me of the particular nature of his embarrassments, that we might concert measures for his relief, when, looking at me as if surprised, “My dear Sir,” said he, “I thought we had settled all that last night. I informed you that I was

ruined if I did not raise eight thousand louis d'or; and you, with that friendship which I never doubted in one with whom I am soon to be so nearly connected, kindly undertook to procure it for me; you don't mean to draw back, do you?" I told him I was as much inclined to serve him as ever, and should with pleasure do whatever lay in my power to extricate him, but that the demand was so much beyond what I was able to meet, that it required some consideration. "Then you refuse me?"—"I have it not," said I; "besides, how do you want it, and for how long?" "O yes!" said he, breaking in with a sneer, "and upon what security? your friendship has come to that! Do you give it me, or do you not?" "I have told you," I answered, "that I have it not, but——" "But you don't mean to give it me," cried he again; "you have deceived me—you led me to believe that I might rely upon you; and now, this is your boasted ge-

nerosity; this is your affection for a family for whom you could sacrifice your life cheerfully. And yet, rather than put yourself to a little trouble, rather than spare a few useless counters, you will allow that family to be disgraced and ruined. Do you think my sister would give her hand to a man who, for the sake of a few livres, suffered her brother to be disgraced in his Regiment, and forced to flee, her father to see his house degraded, and herself shut out from society?"—"Hear me, Stewart, hear me!" I repeatedly exclaimed; but he went on in the same strain till out of breath, when he paused for a moment; and I again said, "I have told you I will do every thing in my power, but—" "But!" cried he fiercely; "give me no more of your but's; will you give me the money?" "I have it not," I could only again repeat. "Well, had you chosen, Mons. Cheneveux would never have refused to accommodate you." "It is far beyond what I have

power to draw for." " Cold-hearted wretch ! what a fool I was to trust to thee !" said he, clenching his fist, and darting from me ; " I disclaim you for ever !" I can hardly tell you how much I felt agitated ; but he was scarcely gone, when I would have given the world that he had come back ; and yet it is better he did not, for I would, I believe, have involved both myself and you by complying with his demands, and debarred all hope of being soon united to Mary, except it had been to struggle with misfortune together. I followed him in less than a quarter of an hour, but not finding him, I came here again, and firmly resolved not to comply. What to do, how to communicate with his father and sister, I know not.

* * * * *

I have begun half a dozen of letters, first to my Mary, then to old Mr Stewart, but I have torn them almost as fast as written. I find I cannot write. I must

go to St Germain's ; how differently from what I expected !—Pity me ! O pity me !

* * * * *

I have been at St Germain's. When I arrived there, I was informed that the family had gone for Paris without alighting. I returned, and found the following card had been left at my hotel :—" SIR, I shall never consent that my daughter be united to a coward. My family may be reduced by misfortune, but we shall never, I hope, be self-degraded. Your conduct to my son can admit of no excuse ; you need therefore save myself and Mary the pain of refusing to see you —Sir, &c."

To Geo. Comyns, Esq.

London.

I have indeed been very unwell ; but I am now so far recovered, that I hope in a few days to see my dear mother once more at Bowerbank.—I know there is at least one woman in the world who will receive

me kindly, and who will not harshly accuse me, and from whom I am not debarred the opportunity of exculpating myself. At present I need only say, that immediately on receiving Mr Stewart's card at Paris, I ran to his son's lodgings. Neither of us were capable of giving explanations. We had a rencontre, and I received a pretty severe wound, which I account fortunate. The physician thinks it has saved me from a more dangerous fever, perhaps from delirium. Colonel Stewart has lost his pension, his son has been dismissed the service, and they have gone I cannot learn whither.—Mary is with them!

The following was left at his hotel the same evening on which Mr Comyns was wounded, but not delivered till after his recovery, when every trace of the Stewarts was lost.

No 8.

DEAR GEORGE,

When we last parted, I little thought that I would ever be under the necessity of forbidding you to enquire after *me*, who only lived to render you happy, or that I should steal from—sleep I was going to say—but I have no inclination to sleep now, my waking thoughts are sad—my dreams are—I cannot tell you what they are.—I do not either wish to sleep or dream. Has my existence for the last few weeks been a dream? Oh it was a sweet one! Why did I awake? But my thoughts begin to wander—all are silent around me. It seems as if I stood alone amid the dead. I cannot reproach myself.—I suffer—but I am innocent—nor dare I blame you—perhaps you might not have had the money—yet the sum was so small, and the case so urgent.—Had your family been concern-

ed, I think I could have sacrificed a great deal. I think I could have almost faced poverty, to have saved your brother from disgrace, and your aged parent from want ! But I do not know the particulars ; I hope they are exaggerated. I can easily assign other reasons for your not accepting my brother's challenge, besides "*cowardice*," and there may be others for your refusing to lend him a few *livres*, besides either baseness or ingratitude.—If this reach you, it will tell you how anxious I am about the termination of this excruciating difference ; but my father and Charles are at present so enraged, that I dare not venture to mention your name. Could you not find some method of communication ? Mrs Chevenex might transmit me a letter perhaps. My father is talking about leaving St Germain, but where he intends going, I have never heard him hint. But, wherever we go, you can never be indifferent to your now almost heart-broken

MARY STEWART.

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VOL. III.

No. 9.

To Mrs Comyns, from Walters.

MY DEAR MADAM,

In order to prevent your receiving, by any circuitous method, an exaggerated account of Mr George's misfortune, I must, notwithstanding his injunctions to the contrary, give you a relation of the circumstances, as nearly as I can recollect them, which led to such an unhappy issue.

When every arrangement was completed, as we imagined, for the approaching nuptials, we were one evening, or rather morning, a few days ago, awakened with a most furious knocking at the door of our hotel. I was in bed, and started up in the greatest agitation, imagining that we were attacked by house-breakers, for since we arrived here, (notwithstanding the boasted vigilance of the French police), there have been more murders and robberies committed in this city, (which claims the title of

the most polite in Europe), than I ever recollect to have heard of during the whole course of my life in Scotland. I distinguished Mr Comyns's voice immediately in the passage, for the persons had obtained entry ere I was half dressed, and after a loud but short altercation, quiet was restored. I then rung my bell, and on enquiry found, that the noise had proceeded from Captain Stewart having obtained a forcible entrance into the hotel; when I heard, however, that he had gone away quietly with Mr Comyns to his room, I remained satisfied, waiting till morning for an explanation of this unexpected incident; but, anticipating no good, when I arose, which was pretty early, I found Mr Comyns in the parlour, walking backwards and forwards with an air of anxiety. "You would be alarmed last night, Walters," said he to me as I entered. I answered that I was a little; but when I had heard that it was Captain Stewart, I was easy, as

I imagined it was only some frolic. "He's a foolish fellow," was the only remark Mr Comyns made. And as I saw that he did not wish to be more communicative, I did not harass him with any questions, but endeavoured to change the subject. I spoke of his marriage, of the approaching journey to England, and the happiness he would have in introducing his lively and accomplished lady to his amiable mother; but his answers were chiefly in monosyllables. So the conversation dropped, and I retired. In about two hours after, as I passed the parlour door in order to go out, Captain Stewart rushed rudely before, and with a face inflamed with rage, and muttering something about vengeance, darted into the street. I went to your son, and presuming upon our friendship, for he has behaved throughout our travels like a brother, I begged to know the cause of the Captain's fury, hoping that nothing untoward had occurred with regard to the ex-

pected nuptials. He dryly answered, "That it was nothing with regard to them, and begged to be left alone." I endeavoured to find some excuse for remaining with him, as my suspicions had rendered me uneasy; but in a more peremptory tone than he had ever used, he insisted upon me leaving him; then, checking himself, he added, "I know you have an engagement for this morning; I wish particularly to be alone; do not disturb me; I shall perhaps tell you the reason afterwards." I answered, that I did not wish to press my services when they appeared disagreeable; that he knew I had never done so; but upon the present occasion, taking all that had happened into consideration, he would not think it strange if I felt more than usually interested and anxious. "A short time," he replied, "will explain all appearances. Go you and fulfil your engagement." "Tell me," said I, "and I shall ask no more, Has any challenge passed be-

tween you and Captain Stewart?" "No," said he, "none, I assure you." I repeated the question, and he answered gravely, "Have I ever given you reason to doubt my word? There has no challenge passed, I tell you; let that satisfy you." Still I was not satisfied, but I could do no more; I durst not insist farther.

I went away, therefore, and very soon dispatched my engagement. Determined, however, in some shape or other, to get my mind set at rest, I went to a coffee-room near the Palais Royal, which I knew was frequented by the officers of Captain Stewart's regiment, in the hope of perhaps seeing the Captain, or at least of learning something about his movements. When I entered the room, a son of Mr Chevenoux the banker came to me; and while we were talking together about the common topics of the day, we were joined by a young officer. "We were extremely lucky last night," said he to Mr Cheve-

neux, "The Duke's club lost immensely—Stewart got absolutely mad; I never saw him play so ill. The Duke, though he retained his temper, could not conceal his chagrin. The Prince was in raptures; his exultation was without bounds; poor Stewart! I shall die with vexation when I meet him." I was all attention to this information, and was just about to enquire more particularly into this story, when, with the most genteel bow in the world, Mr Cheveneux cut short the conversation, and retired with the officer. I went directly to Mr Cheveneux senior, in order to make some enquiry into the character of Captain Stewart, which, from what the officers had said, began to appear to me in a very doubtful point of view; and I concluded that his visit to Mr Comyns was some way connected with his loss at play. I found the old gentleman at home, who received me with the greatest politeness. I introduced the subject of Captain Stewart, and he

broke out into raptures.—“ The Captain was the most agreeable, sprightly, elegant, fashionable young gentleman in the world, the greatest favourite with the ladies and the *beaux espritz*! quite fascinating and irresistible.” When I said I understood he played deep, “ *C’est un garçon plein de feu,*” said the banker. I mentioned the loss which I understood him to have met with. Mr Cheveneux, like a true Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders, said, “ He was sorry for it, *mais les armes sont journalières.*” When I found it impossible to obtain any information from this quarter, which could be of the smallest use to me, I returned to the coffee-room to enquire at the keeper respecting the Duke’s club; of which I received the following account, which is neither more nor less than an association of sharpers; and it consists of the Colonel, the Duke de —, and a number of young men of family, whose ways are greater than their means, and who, in or-

der to supply the deficiency between their income and their expense, have reduced gambling to a science. The chief objects on whom they exercise their skill, are raw youths, sons of the Bourgeois, who think it an honour to be placed by these unprincipled sprigs of nobility, who laugh at the ruin of their aspiring dupes; and our countrymen, who, thoughtless, and generally better provided with money than wit to guide it, believe the professions of their polite acquaintances; and are daily gulled and robbed by their dear friends, male and female, till left without a sous; they, like our first parents, discover too late, the true character of their tempters, by having their eyes opened to perceive their own nakedness.

Of all beings upon earth I have never met with a more contemptible race of profligate miscreants—such a vain, mean, rapacious, lying, fawning, deceitful tribe, as those swarms of noblesse, who cannot dig,

and who are ashamed to beg; but who plunder, cheat, and over-reach each other and strangers with unmatched impartiality, impudence, and dexterity.

I should mention, that there are numerous clubs of this description, and almost all of them are connected with ladies,—married ladies of the highest rank in the state, who act no subordinate part in providing prey for these wretches; and woe be to the man who once gets ensnared among them. They seldom, however, play with adepts, excepting for the purpose of obtaining instruction, or in consequence of some vain boast of superior skill, or any other point of honour, and then the contest is deadly, the whole funds of both parties being put to hazard. Sometimes two clubs take up the quarrel of individuals; in which case the dispute is seldom adjusted without the complete destruction of one of the worthy associations, whose fortunes, and often lives, are sacrificed in

the rivalry. I easily comprehended, what I afterwards learned was the truth, that a match had been played between two clubs, and that the one to which Stewart was attached had been the loser. I was now at no loss to account for Captain Stewart's behaviour; but my anxiety was increased with regard to Mr Comyns; for although I was fully persuaded of his prudence, yet the situation in which he stood with regard to that family was such, that I was afraid he might have been inveigled into some rash unguarded step. I therefore hastened back to our Hotel, where I found my friend still more agitated than when I left him, but still equally averse to entering upon any explanation. I introduced the subject of gaming, and gave him as news an account of the clubs which I have mentioned, and hinted my suspicions that perhaps Stewart might be connected with some of these kind of societies, young gentlemen of the army being very liable to be entrapped. I perceived

from his countenance, that my suspicions were not altogether ill-founded; but without giving me any opportunity for further conversation, he ordered his servant to get ready, and he set out for St Germain, telling me he would return in the evening. During his absence, I learned some further particulars. The Duke of Boulogne's club, and another, at the head of which the Prince of C—— is, the two most honourable societies of the description I have mentioned, and who are keen rivals in the glorious warfare, had had a trial of skill, in consequence of a great run of good fortune which the former had enjoyed from a late arrival of English gentry; while the other, owing to some deficiency on the part of their caterers, had not been able to profit equally by the lucky occurrence. The natural vivacity of his Grace of Boulogne, inflamed by the success of his society, had overleaped its usual bounds in presence of some of the members of the rival club, who, feeling sore from their

having been disappointed in what they considered their right, observed that success was not always the surest sign of skill, and spoke rather in a contemptuous tone of the ability of the winners, who, in their turn, retorted with equal spirit. The leaders entered eagerly into the feelings of their partizans; and, determined to put the superiority to the test, by choosing each two from their number, to whose finesse they entrusted the honour of the corps, Stewart was one of the Duke's champions, and his side was the unsuccessful one. Enraged at his disgrace and defeat, he challenged the Prince to an individual attempt, which was accepted by his Royal Highness, with some sarcastic remarks on his opponent's want of knowledge, his previous defeat, and a polite insinuation, that his banker might not relish any additional demands. These remarks completely exasperated him, and effectually accomplished the Prince's pur.

pose, whose success had soothed his temper; and, ere midnight, Stewart had not only lost every penny he was possessed of, but stood pledged for a sum equivalent to ten thousand pounds sterling. The intended marriage of his sister with your son was no secret, and the Captain, with a view of exalting himself, had, if not asserted, at least not contradicted the report of Mr Comyns's fortune being four times greater than it really is, and the Frenchman had calculated upon that; for when Stewart, in an agony, threw down the cards, he remarked, with a satanic grin, "The rich English lord would certainly oblige his near relation, by accommodating him with such a trifle." Stewart, rising from the table, told him he would wait upon him next day. He came immediately to our Hotel, and was the cause of the noise which alarmed me, as I informed you. Mr Comyns was taken so suddenly, and the sum was so large, that he refused

to give it him; on which they parted. Mr Comyns went to St Germain's to inform the Colonel; but his son had been before him, and represented the affair in such a light to his father, that your son was formally renounced by the family, in a card which was sent to the Hotel in his absence. When he returned from St Germain's, and found the card, he, almost frantic, left the house, (as I have been informed, for I was not at home at the time) for Captain Stewart's lodgings. When he arrived there, the Captain was in violent altercation with the Prince d'A——; and, in the excess of his rage, proceeded to the last extremity. He struck the Prince—swords were immediately drawn, and his Highness was only prevented from fighting by the representation of his attendants, who prevented him from degrading himself, by staining his sword with the blood of a person he could so easily punish

much more severely; and they hurried him away.

In such a situation, Stewart, as may easily be supposed, was not much inclined to enter into any calm discussion; and Mr Comyns, feeling himself outraged, ill treated, and affronted, was as little disposed as he. They unfortunately came into contact in this state of irritation; a few words of mutual accusation only passed between them, when Stewart made a lunge at Mr Comyns, and slightly wounded him. Mr Comyns then drew, but he was no match for his antagonist, who run him through the body, and left him to the care of the people of the house. A surgeon was instantly sent for, and at the same time they sent a messenger to inform me. I hastened to the place, and found him in the hands of the medical man, who, after he had dressed his wound, pronounced it a case of extreme danger, and said, that it would be impossible for him to be moved to his

Hotel; we therefore had him put to bed in the house, and I set out in search of our friend Dr Bourne, who luckily had not yet left Paris. Captain Stewart never returned to his lodgings; and I never left Mr Comyns till Dr Bourne had pronounced him out of danger. I have seized the first leisure hour to write you, unobserved by him, which I do with the greater readiness, as I can assure you that he is now recovering very fast; and in a few days, I hope, he will be able to tell you, under his own hand, that he is completely restored to health.—I am, dear Madam,

(Signed) ED. WALTERS.

To Mrs Comyns, from the same.

DEAR MADAM,

I take the opportunity of Dr Bourne, who is returning to Scotland, to confirm the good accounts contained in my last re-

specting Mr George's health, which he can also corroborate; but the best testimony will be the few lines which Mr Comyns says he intends sending himself by the same gentleman. I mentioned in my last, that Stewart had never returned to his lodgings. The whole family have been under the necessity of making a precipitate retreat from Paris, in consequence of the unpardonable affront offered to a Prince of the Blood. He has been broken, and his old father struck off the army list for his son's fault; and Miss Stewart has also fallen a sacrifice to the misconduct of her brother, by being involved in the family misfortune. As soon as I was able to leave Mr Comyns, I went to the Coffee-house in order to learn the particulars, the surgeon who visited him having only been able to give us a brief outline; but then, though hardly a week old, the story was out of date, and Captain Stewart as little talked or thought of as if such a person

had never been in existence. At M. Cheveneux, I was told that Mr Stewart had lifted all the money he had in his hands, and had gone, he did not know where. Captain Stewart was mentioned with that ostentatious self-gratulating pity, more disgusting than downright abuse; not that it was undeserved; had he suffered alone, I should never have minded it; but because it was called forth by no sympathetic feeling with the unfortunate, but offered as an apology for withholding assistance from, and breaking off all connection with, a family in distress—a wretched subterfuge to conceal the baseness of deserting a friend in adversity; but the pity of the old was even easier to be borne, than the concealed exultation of the young Cheveneux. He seemed pleased that the Scotch pride of Miss Stewart would be under the necessity now of asking a favour, and did not even disguise his feelings of satisfaction at the unhappy affair between her

brother and Mr George. I learned that she had spent some time with Mademoiselle Cheveneux previously to her departure; and I therefore determined, if possible, to obtain a private conversation with her, on purpose to discover the retreat of the Stewarts; and that very evening I was lucky enough to find her disengaged. She told me, Miss Stewart, when she saw her, was in the deepest affliction, and could only weep, but was unacquainted with the circumstances which occasioned her father's sudden resolution to quit France. All that she understood was, that Mr Comyns and her brother had quarrelled about a *small* sum of money which the Captain had requested the loan of from Mr Comyns, and had been refused; that he had been obliged to part with his commission, and her father to mortgage his annuity, in order to relieve him from the embarrassment. That he (Mr Comyns) had accompanied his refusal with insulting language,

which provoked her brother to desire an honourable meeting, and that Mr Comyns also refused ; but she knew nothing of the final catastrophe, having been hurried away so abruptly. Their route was of necessity a secret, and their residence, of course, the same. The only thing I could learn with certainty was, that their resources were very limited, and inadequate to their support.

Were it not for the sake of Mr George's feelings, and the strength of his attachment to Miss Stewart, which is so deeply rooted it may not be easy to eradicate, I almost would reckon the escape he has made a lucky one. From his decided opposition in principle to the family with which he must have been connected, I do think that it would have given birth to many disagreeable sensations. Miss Stewart, though mild in her temper, and gentle in her manners, was educated in the bosom of the Church of Rome, and you know

with what religious horror a Papist is looked upon in your part of the country. With George I know forms are of minor consequence ; but *forms* are *essentials* in the Romish communion, and the amiable benevolent temper of his wife, had he married Miss Stewart, might have seduced him from our church ; or, at all events, he could never have refused her the same liberty he claims for himself, of following the dictates of his conscience in matters of religion, and attending to the forms of that which he prefers. And thus he might have hurt his respectability in the county, as much as if he had turned his mansion-house into a nunnery, like Sir Godfrey Harestanes in a neighbouring kingdom. Distance and time, I trust, with change of scene, will weaken the affection, and the attractions of some of his fair Protestant countrywomen efface the remembrance of this unfortunate attachment. As soon as he is able to undergo the fatigue, we shall

set out upon our journey homeward.—I am, dear Madam.

No. 10.

Mr Comyns, to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

I beg to introduce to you the bearer, Dr Bourne, my friend, of whom you have frequently heard me speak. I hoped to have done this personally, but I shall be detained here longer than I expected, in consequence of my state of health. The Doctor will inform you that I am now nearly recruited, should he reach you soon. But as his time is uncertain, and perhaps he may be hindered upon the road, you may probably hear from me again before he get your length.

The following are copies of the letters Mr Comyns wrote to his friend Dr Bourne, and help to fill up a chasm.

George Comyns to N. Bourne, M. D. .

DEAR DOCTOR,

I am no fatalist. But certainly

“ There is a Providence that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.”

If in any case this was doubtful, matrimony is not the case ; and of all the cases that ever occurred, or that may hereafter occur in the pairing of the human species, mine is one which admits of no disputation. We were united in affection, there was no opposition on the part of those who might have considered themselves possessed of a right to oppose. Fortune did not

stand in the way. I was not ambitious, and she was content. Yet, with the cup at our very lips, we were not permitted to taste it. There are to me still many circumstances wholly inexplicable in this circling ruin which has engulfed all my hopes and expectations. My disappointment has arisen from causes over which I had no controul. What wretched consolation is it to tell me, *I* could not help it ! It might have been helped. There is no use in appealing to the decrees of fate for comfort, when human agency is the evident cause of misfortune. I ought to have known the character of that scoundrel her brother, and have put my happiness beyond his reach. Bourne, when you court a woman, never court her relations. I would almost add, do not consult your own till all is settled, and then you may pay them the compliment of asking their opinion. Now that all is over, I comfort myself with the thought that Miss Stewart

cannot be suffering so much on my account, as I have done on hers. Had her affection been as ardent as mine, she could undoubtedly have found some method of saying so. Ladies are not in general deficient in stratagem ; she knew where I was to be found. By heavens, had I had the smallest hint, and the ability to crawl, she would not have remained three hours in Paris without hearing from me, or seeing me.

Miss Stewart to George Comyns, Esq.

DEAR GEORGE,

Before I leave France for ever, though you have not answered my last distracted letter—but I did not sit down to upbraid, my soul was never formed for upbraidings—before I leave France for ever, before impassable barriers for ever separate us, I will give vent to my feelings, and perhaps

find ease in telling you how often I pray for your happiness, how often I lament that destiny which tears asunder ties consecrated by vows as pure and as sincere as ever were breathed in the presence of Heaven. Yet, if an union of hearts can exist independent of more sensible connection, if the soul be capable of retaining the impressions of love when divorced from the body, neither distance nor death, however either may interrupt, can entirely destroy the sweetest sensations connected with genuine affection,—the remembrance of the past, and the hope of the future.

Till sensation itself cease, till this heart be as cold as the stone that shall cover it, I shall never forget that delightful evening ramble on the banks of the Seine, when, with a trembling rapture I would not express—I dared not trust myself to utter—but yet could not, and scarcely attempted to conceal, I heard you directly declare your attachment; and, when clasp-

ing me to your breast, you allowed me to hide in your bosom the blushing avowal that it was reciprocal. I shall cherish the recollection in secret,—I shall nourish it in solitude,—it shall go with me to the grave. Alas! could no other victim satisfy than the man I loved? Could no other ingredient be found to fill up the cup of bitterness to our wretched family,—than his peace?

In the midst of my felicity, when my heart was too big for utterance, I sighed, and I wept. When you kissed off my tears, you said, “They were precious as the dew-drops of morning,—the gems of love,—the pledges of joy.” Thy allusions were ominous,—thy words were prophetic; my joys were like the morning dew, but the remembrance is sweet.

The grave is the refuge of the miserable. Thank God, we can look beyond the grave! I was gazing last evening from my chamber window to the west; the sun

had just set, and the mild glories of the sky promised a lovelier day. I was pensive.—I know not how it is, but a lovely scene at sun-set always made me pensive. Since ever I recollect any thing, the close of a fine summer day has ever been connected in my mind with the closing scene of life; and the refulgence of an evening sky seemed so many rays issuing from the regions of immortality. I did not check the pleasing illusion, for the idea of my Comyns mingled with it. I was pursuing the train of thought,—my imagination was bewildered in the crowd of brilliant but undefinable fancies that took possession of my soul, when I was recalled by my brother's voice, loudly urging me to prepare for our journey. With sorrowful forebodings I did so, and the sun which I had seen go down, arose upon *me* many leagues distant from all that is dear to my heart. Here we have stopped through mere inability to proceed farther, there

being no horses to be procured in the village, and those which brought us hither are fairly knocked up. My father behaved kindly to me upon the road, but there is a settled grief upon his countenance which wrings my soul. Charles is absolutely frantic; he has raved constantly since we left Paris so unintelligibly, that I am afraid for his intellects, and he has distressed me beyond measure, by making you the unvaried subject of his incoherent invective; and in all his injurious observations, I see with pain my father silently acquiesce. All that is left for me is to cherish in my heart the recollection of our happier days, and pray for the time when we shall meet in a better world. I do not know that I shall again have any opportunity of writing you. I cannot tell you now where to direct for me. God bless you. In my orisons I shall ever remember you. Do not forget your unfortunate Mary. Farewell, farewell.

Mr Comyns to Dr Bourne.

OH! my dear Bourne, Mary is all that I ever thought her, the same kind affectionate Mary that she always was, and I have lost her for ever. I have just received two letters, the last written from ——. But I can write no more. I shall show you them when we meet.

When Miss Bruce had perused the preceding letters, she returned them to Mrs Comyns, asking, “If she had never heard what became of this lady, this Miss Stewart?”

“She married another gentleman afterward, a countryman of her own,” replied Mrs Comyns; “and I thought you almost might have anticipated what I am about to mention,—Miss Stewart, Mr Hay’s re-

lation, to whom I introduced you, is her daughter. Like her mother she has been unfortunate, but I am only acquainted with her history since she came to Scotland, and that part of it has not been very pleasant. She is now entirely destitute. Without any fault of her own, she is placed without the protection of one single relative. It is the lot of some, my dear Ann, to be early cast upon the world, but sometimes 'tis best to bear the yoke in our youth. It sobers the mind, and I believe want of sobriety of thought has ruined a far greater number of young persons, than even more perceptible moral delinquencies. You will excuse an old woman, and one who herself has felt affliction, for being tedious."

"I should never excuse myself," answered Miss Bruce warmly, "if, on such a subject, I dared for a moment to think Mrs Comyns tedious."

"Miss Stewart," continued Mrs Comyns, "has lost her mother, and with her the

only *claim* to support from her relations. But the daughter of the woman my George loved so dearly, and who was equally attached to him, can never be indifferent to me. While I live she shall never want a home, and when I die she shall not be left destitute. Now, what I wish is, that you would go with me to help me to support and soothe the lovely sufferer, while I communicate the distressing intelligence, and offer her an asylum. Not that I would wish you to be present at the interview ; all I wish is, that you should be with me, and help me to comfort her."

CHAP. V.

Well, he in time may come to clear himself.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

MR BRUCE, who was waiting anxiously for his son, was agreeably surprised when the Captain came into his bed-room, in Queen's Street, before he thought he would have had time to receive the express, and send a reply.

“You are very rapid in your movements, Ewan,” said he, as he took him by the hand; “you are likely to profit by your military education. I scarcely expected you so soon, though I am exceedingly happy at your arrival; you could not have

come more apropos. After breakfast I shall enter upon the business for which I sent for you; you can go and see your mother in the mean time, till I get ready, and tell her I shall be with you to breakfast in a few minutes."

Shortly after they met in the breakfast-parlour, and sat down to breakfast together, and discussed the state of the weather, the country, and the roads, with as sententious a composure as a company of farmers, who have ridden some six or eight miles to a friend's funeral, talk over these topics, while partaking of some refreshment in the house, before the lifting of the corpse.

When the meal was finished, Ewan followed his father to his bed-room, with an anxiety considerably heightened by what his sister had said, and also from having observed that his father appeared not only more taciturn and gloomy in his behaviour, but considerably altered in his personal

appearance, since he had last seen him. When they had entered the room, his father requested him to sit down.

“ You will wonder,” said he, “ why I wrote for you to come to me in such a hurry. I am now to explain that to you. You are come to that time of life when you have a right to know something about the state of your father’s affairs, and be able to take some share in the management of them. You know that I have been a very affectionate father, and have always supplied you liberally, but owing to the debt left upon the estate by your grandfather, and the remittances which I was under the necessity of constantly making your uncle abroad, as long as he lived, I was forced to borrow very considerably, to carry on the extensive improvements upon my estates, which in a few years will amply repay, but it will require some thousands more before I get them completed, and before I can get any return; and the factor

informed me, that if I cannot raise the needful, the improvements must be stopped; and besides that, Mr Langline the overseer, who has advanced several sums upon the rights of the Argarnish estate, if they are stopped, and he discharged, will put my bonds in execution, which would force me to sell my whole property that's not in entail, after I have expended so much money upon it, and that at the very time when it is just about to recompense me for all my trouble and expence. And to add to my embarrassment, I have, within these few days, been served with a summons of count and reckoning, by your uncle Ewan's wife, who has arrived in England, for the arrears due upon her allowance, which, as your uncle was not a very regular man, amount to a large sum, and she insists upon an immediate settlement."

"I am sorry that you should be at any additional embarrassment on my account,"

said the Captain. “ I shall relinquish cheerfully any allowance you have hitherto made me, and restrict myself entirely to my pay. And as your family is not very extensive, by selling or letting your town-house, and living altogether in the country, and giving up the name of a town-house, for you know you have only had it in name these some years, you might soon be beyond difficulty, and live as respectably as any gentleman in Scotland.”

“ But, Ewan, that will not do. I must have a sum of money for immediate exigencies. If I had that to set me free at once I might do, for then I would have time to think ; but till I get that I get nothing. I must sell, and then all the money I have already laid out is lost, worse than lost, for it will go to enrich a purchaser who has the money to carry through my plans, who will buy my estate at an under-value, because the real extent of my improvements are not known, who will get

the whole in a state which a few hundreds will enable him to finish, and reap all the honour and advantage, while I, whose money in fact has done the greatest part, and whose skill planned the whole, will be beggared, and laughed at into the bargain."

"There is my uncle's estate, you can sell it; better have a small estate clear, than a couple larger ones entangled."

"But there happens unfortunately to be an obstacle, he has left, as you wrote me, a daughter."

"What of that, is not the estate mine? I can give my consent to its sale."

"There was a will, and the estate goes to his daughter. Even the bonds I have upon it are dubious; and I have only two chances left there to escape ruin, the one is the death of the daughter, and the other is the loss of the will, which I have learned was committed to the charge of Macnaughton, my brother's servant, who has never been heard of for several years back,

and who I hope has broken his neck, or been hanged, for I heard that he set out for France, to seek for your cousin and her mother."

"Then you have been more successful in your inquiries after him than Eneas M'Bain."

"He was at Argarnish, but I did not see him; I happened to be at Broomside; and he spent a day with Dugald, and told him he was going back to France; but what became of him, whether he went or not, I cannot learn. Nor would I have cared, if he had not blazoned about that he had the will, and that a daughter of his master was the heiress; and now even Jock Wheedle, the man I placed as factor upon the estate, refuses to advance me any thing upon the ground, lest he should be called to account for his intromissions, by which I shall even be deprived of the means of carrying on the plea, should it come to that, and that through the me-

dium of a vile ungrateful wretch, whose father's family I kept from starvation, and whose own education came out of my pocket. But I'll take care of that scoundrel; as soon as I can get free I shall set him a packing. Only I must at present keep upon some terms with him till I get the money raised, for he has been very useful."

"Has Wheedle ever rendered you any account?"

"He has given me I can't tell how many, but they are so voluminous that I have no patience to go through them; and then he has a room in the fine new house he has bought in York Place lined with green boxes, which he tells me are all full of my papers."

"I think you should send for him."

"I promised to call at his house when you came. Your mother does not like to see him come so frequently here, and I don't wish to disoblige her. I have sent him a note telling him of your arrival, and

that we would wait upon him in the course of the evening."

"But if his papers be so very voluminous as you mention, to what use will our waiting upon him tend? it is impossible that we can go over them."

"I do not mean that we should, we can talk about them. But it is about the business for which I brought you to town that I intend going principally there; it is to get it arranged, or at least put in some train of arrangement."

"What is it?"

"When I married your mother, you know that her estates were settled upon the heirs-male of her body begotten, and saddled besides with her dowry, so that, with regard to them, I am hardly so well off as a liferenter, and I can raise nothing upon them without her consent, and that your mother has lately refused to give, which I suppose has been suggested to her by Ann, for both of them have grown

intolerably sulky of late. To-day at breakfast, you had a specimen of our agreeable meals, and my tete-a-tetes with your mother, though sometimes a little warmer, are not more pleasant. I never could conceive from whom your sister inherited her headstrong temper, till I found her mother so unmanageable; and she is so excessively stupid, that there is no convincing her that all our embarrassments are merely temporary, and that, if she would only lend her assistance, they would all be soon and easily got over; but that I cannot prevail upon her to do. However, we shall have the whole gone over with Wheedle in the evening; he will explain it to you, and shew you the plans, by which you will understand them more easily. But the business which particularly presses is this. When I was much in want of money, the year before last, two of my principal tenants having failed by a fall in the markets, and a distemper among the sheep, I

applied to Mr Wheedle to try and borrow it for me; and as I had exhausted the whole of the heritable securities, and Wheedle said even somewhat more than the whole, though that did not appear till we came to look a little closer into matters, since I got this summons from Mrs Cameron, he advised me to get Mrs Bruce to join me in a bond upon the Broomside property. But she appearing a little reluctant at the time, I thought, if I could procure it in any other way, it would be better; and at length Mr Wheedle succeeded in getting what I wanted borrowed upon my own personal bond, with a promise that your name should be joined in it when required. This I promised, as I never supposed it would be necessary, expecting to be able to clear it off before that time, or get it extended without it; and I dare say this might have been done, but the kelp turned out so ill, owing to the large quantity of barilla, and the cheap-

ness of that article, as my agent in Glasgow informed me, that it will be at least next year before I can hope to have as much clear money as to enable me to meet that demand, and the person from whom the money was got, is very urgent to have the bond or the money. It is only for four thousand pounds, and this will set me at liberty, and give me time to look about me. The new tenants are all substantial men. I shall appropriate the next year's rents to liquidate the bond, which, together with what I hope we shall be able to raise upon the Broomside lands, for your mother will never stand out against us both, will prevent me from being any longer under any obligations to people I despise."

The father, who had undergone many mental pangs before he could bend his spirit to appear as a suitor to his son, after he had finished, looked at his son, and rather indignantly waited his reply, which

he thought ought to have anticipated the conclusion of his speech.

The Captain, who had entered the army as soon as he left college, rather with the view of passing a few years in an honourable profession, in which he could gain a knowledge of the world, than with any intention of following it out as the business of his life, had spent this time, since he got his commission, in the thoughtless gaiety then so fashionable among young officers, without troubling himself farther about money concerns, than how to make his pay, and the remittances he received from home, answer the ends of his expenditure. As he considered it a point of honour to preserve his family name unsullied, he never allowed it to be insulted by impertinent cards from tradesmen; and would much sooner have denied himself a gratification, than purchased it at the expence of admitting his inferiors in rank to that familiarity which a debtor is sometimes

unable to repress in “ a vulgar wretch he owes a trifle to.” But beyond this, which formed the subject of many a kind maternal admonition, to which he paid the most religious respect, more especially as his mother’s monitory letters generally covered a bill, he had not yet advanced in his arithmetical education. And this being the first time his father had ever consulted, or even spoken to him upon any such subjects, he did not altogether comprehend the extent of his request, or how far he was bound to comply with what appeared, at first sight, the appeal of one parent against another, and that other the one for whom he felt the greatest, or at least the fondest affection ; and for whose judgment he had a greater respect, than to admit the charge of stupidity against her, merely on the strength of his father’s hasty affirmation. He therefore replied, that as this was a matter of importance, and the first transaction of the kind in which he had

ever engaged, he would like to understand it thoroughly, and he would be better able to give an answer after he had conversed with Mr Wheedle.

“ I see how it is,” replied his father sternly, “ you have been tutored too upon this business. But, as I have given you a more complete statement of my affairs than I have given to your mother, and I am prepared to give you every other information which I think any son could ask from a father, I expect, from your good sense, every assistance you can render me in my difficulties. But if neither this, nor gratitude for my kindness, nor your duty to your parent, have any influence, a sense of your own interest should teach you, that it is the best line of conduct you can pursue to keep well with me, for if you join your mother against me, and strengthen her in her refusal to comply with my wishes, and enable me to finish with honour the speculations I have entered into, and

into, and which, I repeat, can only embarrass us for a very short time, I shall sell every acre I can sell, and cut down every stick upon the estates. I'll not leave so much as a twig; and so far from doubling the rent-roll, as you will see clearly in Mr Wheedle's papers might be done at present, by completing my schemes, you will not be master of a free sixpence beyond your pay, die when I may."

"You accuse my mother very unjustly," replied Captain Bruce. "She never hinted a syllable to me about the state of your affairs, nor did I ever hear from her that you were in the least embarrassment. This conversation is the first I ever had with any living soul upon this subject; and so far was I from suspecting that you was borrowing money, or from being tutored on the subject, that, had I known it, I would have refused to accept of one farthing that contributed to perplex you. It has been my pride to keep myself free from debt, and

I beg to assure you, it shall be one of my highest gratifications to enable my father to make the same boast. If I seemed to hesitate, it was not from the suggestions of any third person, nor was it from any want of affection for you; much less did it proceed from any desire to take a side against you. I have never in my life experienced more pain than I feel at this moment, at the very idea of any hostility between my parents. God forbid that I should be the unhappy means of increasing it. No, Sir, you do me injustice if you allow that suspicion to harbour one instant in your bosom. Could you penetrate my heart, you would see there that the most sincere wish of my soul is for your happiness and prosperity."

"You have now an opportunity of convincing me that these are not mere words of course. Promise me, that, if requisite, you will join in this bond with me to-night."

“ Well, then, I promise.”

“ Now you have relieved me from a load of uneasiness. You must likewise promise me you will not mention it to your mother.”

“ Not mention it to my mother !”

“ No, you must not. Promise this, and I shall ask you to do nothing more without consulting her. But, as she knows nothing of this bond, I cannot allow you to tell her of what I do not wish her to be acquainted with. I have my reasons for it, and you must promise, otherwise you have done nothing.”

“ Well, then, I also promise this, though 'tis the hardest of the two, for I fear she may inquire.”

“ No, she cannot inquire. As she knows nothing, and suspects nothing of this sum, she will never inquire after it. We go to Mr Wheedle's in the evening?”

“ I shall accompany you.”

Shortly after, the father went to the Parliament House, to see Mr Wheedle, and appoint the hour when it would be convenient for all parties to meet in the evening; and Ewan, who complained of being somewhat fatigued, remained at home.

CHAP. VI.

We'll institute new arts, unknown before,
To vary plagues, and make them look like new ones.

WHEN his father had gone out, Captain Bruce, who had had no conversation with his mother, went to her room, and for the first time in his life felt a reluctance to meet with her.

"Is your father gone out, Ewan?" said she, as he entered.

"Yes, Madam."

"Do you know where he is gone? I wished to have seen him before he went out."

"He is gone, he said, to Mr Wheedle's."

“ I am glad he has not taken you with him ; I don’t much like that Wheedle. There are Langlines and him, two fellows that he has to thank for his incumbrances to-day; and I am afraid he will not get quite so easily rid of them as he imagines. You had a long conversation with him this morning; he would tell you of his embarrassments. He never mentions them to me now, since I refused to put my name to some deeds Wheedle brought me, unless I had them first submitted to the inspection of my own man of business.”

“ He told me he was under a little temporary embarrassment. But you know, Ma’am, he is carrying on improvements upon a grand scale.”

“ His improvements upon a grand scale ! I wish he may not improve himself out of his estate. And what provokes me more than any thing, there is that creature Wheedle, your father educated him, clothed him when he had scarcely a rag to

cover his nakedness, and even admitted him to sit at his own table, and brought him forward; he had not a sixpence but what he got from him. Now he has bought a house that might serve a nobleman, one of those fine buildings in the Square, far superior to this, and has his man-servant; and, as I am informed, is in terms about buying an estate. Langline, who thought it an honour to be admitted to the steward's table when he first came to Argarnish, he too turned gentleman; and only the other day, bought Thistleton farm; and your father is indebted to this pair. They can lend him money, and they had the audacity to propose that I should give them security upon my jointure for the payment! and all this to double the rent-roll. This, he tells me, is improving his estates! Before I put my hand to any deed that shall put money into their pockets, I shall put it into the fire first. At least, I shall know better where

they got the money to buy houses, or to lend, before any of mine shall go to pay."

The Captain allowed his mother to proceed in this strain without interruption, till she had exhausted the first ebullition of her passion, and then he began to soothe her, by the most affectionate expressions in his power; and endeavoured, by suggesting the probability of her being misinformed, or prejudiced against these two personages, merely from the circumstances of their low origin, to allay her resentment. But the wound was too deep, and the irritation of too long standing, to be easily subdued.

"I may be misinformed," said she, "but I fear it is only that I am not informed of the worst. If your father's circumstances were not very bad indeed, why should he endeavour to conceal them from his wife? I have given up every thing but my own dowry; and that, perhaps, both he and you may yet have reason to thank me for

retaining. And as to my being prejudiced against the two wretches, on account of their low origin, I deny it. I never despised any man on account of his parentage, or his situation in life, provided his conduct was correct. For, although I do respect a man honourably born, and have still so much of old pride, or prejudice, if you choose to call it, as to regard the inheritance of a name, which has been venerated for ages in the country, a distinction of more value than some of its possessors seem to know, yet it is not with me the being low born, so much as being low bred, that creates disgust. And from all that I have seen, the low-bred retainers of the law are the most despicable; for, in addition to all the worst qualities of the basest vulgar, they acquire a proficiency in the arts of quibbling and cheating beyond all description. The most loathsome of the Egyptian plagues must have been enjoyment, in comparison with the

plague of those vermin who infest our border.”

Captain Bruce, who saw that it would be worse than useless to attempt arguing with his mother in the key she had struck, attempted no reply beyond the extent of an interjection or a monosyllable. But, indeed, he was unable to make any other, he was so completely bewildered with the novelty of the situation in which he was placed, and the very different prospects which had so suddenly burst upon him, since his arrival in Edinburgh, from those which he had been in use to contemplate. He saw plainly that he would be called upon to act a decided part in a very delicate situation ; and was glad when the servant announced a forenoon visitor to his mother, and she left him alone, to ruminate by himself.

His mother, in the very long interview, had added but very little to his information as to the real state of his father's circum-

stances. She was so intent upon gratifying her feelings of resentment against Wheedle and Langline, and so eager to engage the sympathies of her son in the same cause, and had at the same time so many stories to tell him, which were so interwoven with one another, and so intermixed with episodes, that although he was most keenly attentive, he found himself wholly inadequate to the task of following her; and when she had finished, she left him fully more perplexed than when she began. Combining, however, what she had said, with what his father had told him, he had learned sufficient to render him very anxious to get at the full extent of his misfortune; and this he resolved should be his primary object, though he felt himself at the outset surrounded with difficulties on every side.

His father was imperious in his own family, and impatient of contradiction; proud and self-sufficient, but mean and

highly susceptible of flattery. This he expected as a right due to his superior abilities; and those who felt it their interest to study his temper lavishing it upon him, he became alternately the tyrant and the dupe of his dependants. They submitted to his caprice, and flattered his schemes, however absurd, because they profited by his folly; and whenever one project failed, they supplied him with another, which, if it presented a promising outline, was a sufficient inducement for him to engage in it, as he never took the trouble to examine it in detail, but thought only of the profit to arise from the whole when complete, without taking into account the expence necessary to complete it. But although he was so easily flattered into schemes, there was no reasoning him out of them. Even when he perceived that they were not succeeding, any attempt then to persuade him to desist but rendered him the more obstinate;

and he turned the more deaf to advice, the more desperate his object appeared. He became sullen and shy of communication, particularly at home. His son knew this feature in his father's character, and therefore he expected nothing satisfactory would result from any direct endeavour to procure the information he wanted from him. And if affairs were as bad as his mother suspected, he feared the influence of his confidential advisers, his unprincipled flatterers, as he had already set down Wheedle and Langline to be, would involve him beyond remedy before they could be counteracted.

On the other hand, his mother was confessedly ignorant of the particulars which could be of any use to direct him; and she was the very worst person he could apply to to assist him, as she never would condescend to flatter her husband, by humouring his absurdities, but always endeavoured to convince his judgment, when

she perceived, or fancied she perceived, him in a mistake ; which seeming to imply a doubt of his infallibility, was the straight road to strengthen him in the opinion she opposed. This made a constant jarring in their domestic councils, and created two parties when the interests were but one ; and, in cases of emergency, was entirely subversive of all friendly conjoined efforts, as mutual consultation was carefully avoided by the gentleman, because his Lady never could persuade him, but that her object was to exhibit her own superior discernment at his expence ; and even when he acknowledged the justice of her remonstrances, he would act directly opposite, lest she should have the gratification of supposing that, by following her advice, he had allowed her any pre-eminence.

To speak of the affairs of his relations, and the disagreeables between so near relations as his father and mother, was what

Captain Bruce could not endure the thought of. He then regretted having promised so easily to sign the bond, before he knew the nature of the debt, or how it was contracted; but at last he could see nothing else that he could do better, than submit with a good grace to his fate at present, and carefully to watch the current of events.

This point being settled with himself, he shifted his travelling dress, and assisted at his mother's forenoon levee, which was numerously attended, on account of her having only been newly arrived, by a succession of kind inquirers after her health, who came to congratulate her on her coming to town for the season, and entertain her with all the summer gossip.

This occupied Captain Bruce till his father returned, who joined them a little before dinner, in more than usually good humour. Dinner passed over with more cheerfulness than breakfast, which the Captain exerted himself to promote; and they

all appeared newly to recollect, that the company consisted of persons who had a nearer interest in each other's welfare than a common assemblage of strangers. But though expressions of kindness were rather more plenty, and there was a greater appearance of frankness, the subject which all had most at heart, was the one which none of them ventured to touch upon.

CHAP. VII.

How like a fawning publican he looks.

SHYLOCK.

IN the evening Mr Bruce took his son with him to Mr Wheedle's. They were ushered into his *own* room, and received by that gentleman with a great show of respect, and a profusion of compliments. He knew a number of the officers belonging to Captain Bruce's regiment by name, and inquired after them with as much particularity as if they had been his most intimate acquaintances, and his oldest friends; and talked of their families and connections by marriage, of the extent of

their estates, and of their relative value, with far greater fluency than Captain Bruce; who, though in habits of daily intercourse, and most familiar acquaintance, had never been very assiduous in prosecuting this species of inquiry, and was unable to add to Mr Wheedle's stock of knowledge in a line which he was both very eager to cultivate, and very ready to display. The transition was easy from the private to the public value of such society, and the honour of being associated in a regiment with men who did not depend entirely upon their pay for supporting their rank. The high character which the regiment bore, which shone with reflected lustre upon the individuals who held commissions in it, and whose exertions had contributed to produce this effect, naturally closed the panegyrical strain of conversation which Mr Wheedle guided and supported; and all of which, he obliquely insinuated, was especially to be considered

by the Captain as expressive of the high opinion he entertained for the highly favoured individual who held a captain's commission in such a distinguished corps.

The old gentleman was highly delighted with the praises bestowed upon the regiment, as Wheedle did not fail to remind him delicately, that it was owing to his discernment that his son had been early placed in it. And then he descanted upon the bad policy of not putting a young man into a respectable corps, merely for the paltry consideration of saving a few guineas.

“Many a fine young fellow has been thrown away entirely, from such a piece of wretched economy on the part of his parent, who did not wish to advance a little. Putting a gentleman in the way of preferment, which putting him into a respectable regiment is, is an absolute saving, Sir, even going upon their own principles, and laying aside every other

consideration; while setting him among a set of low people, is the surest way of being an eventual loser. There's Mr Gairley of Flockerton's son, an instance quite in point. He was at College when I was attending the law-class, and I got a little acquainted with him. He was a fine hearty young blade, but his father, who was a very contracted being, kept him so short, that he was constantly running in debt, and getting into scrapes; pawning his watch and books, and every thing that would go. He used to boast of making his father pay more in chaise hires, in coming to settle his accounts, than would have kept him genteelly. Till at last old Mr Gairley, by way of getting rid of him, bought him a commission in a regiment that was going to the West Indies; and in consonance with his old habit of avoiding any extra expence, or, as he used frequently to express it, of "keeping him right by keeping him tight," he sent him

by water to London, to go to the Isle of Wight, where his regiment was lying for embarkation, with hardly as much as would pay his travelling charges. But the young man contrived to get acquainted with some sharpers, whose relations had procured them commissions in the same regiment, from the idea that it was more desirable that they should run the risk of the West Indies, than take their chance at the Old Bailey ; and he had hardly joined till he drew on his father to a very considerable amount, which Mr Gairley honoured, in the expectation that he was to sail with the first fair wind ; but this fair wind was in no hurry of coming, and he was always falling into some new scrape. A young woman that he never had seen, swore a child to him, and he not being able to prove an *alibi*, for she affirmed she had followed him from Scotland, it cost him forty guineas to get rid of her ; but this was one of the least of his misfortunes. At

last he very narrowly escaped being involved in a charge of felony, along with one of his brother officers ; and his father, on purpose to save him from any similar mischances, consented to advance a considerable sum, in order to effect an exchange into some other regiment. I had not heard of him for a long time, till I learned the remainder of his adventures in rather an odd way.

“ In the beginning of this season I was in Berwickshire on some business, and I stopped one night at Dunse, at the White Swan Inn. Being rather early for travellers, I chanced to be the only stranger in the house ; I therefore invited the landlord, Mr Craig, a very intelligent facetious man, to sup along with me. As we were about to sit down to supper together, another stranger arrived, whose first question, put in a very audible tone on entering the house, was, if he could have any supper soon, as he had been disappointed

of his dinner? The landlord asked me if I had any objection to admit him to a share along with us? I told him I had none; and he went down stairs, and returned in a twinkling with the new comer. He was a little good looking gentleman, apparently considerably above fifty, but fresh and active, plainly dressed like a substantial farmer. We passed a very pleasant evening together, over a jug of toddy. He discovered by my conversation that I came from Edinburgh, and asked me if I knew young Gairley, and what sort of a young man he was? I told him very freely my opinion, and mentioned a number of his pranks; and he in return told me a number I never heard of, till at last I began to censure the father as freely as I had done the son, for being so stingy. But guess my astonishment, Gentlemen, when he burst out, "D—n the scoundrel, I am his father." I stammered out, "I beg pardon, Sir; but if I had

thought you had been Mr Gairley, I would have been sorry to have said——”

“ You need never ask my pardon,” said he, “ it’s not you I am angry at ; it’s all true enough you have said, except that I never allowed him sufficient money. I allowed him too much. It’s incredible the sums of money that vagabond has cost me, both when he was at the schools, and since he left them. He has been in three different regiments, and now he is coming down to Scotland on the recruiting service, I suppose to get into a fourth ; but he has not been heard of since he sailed, and that’s fully a fortnight ago. I hope in God he has gone to the bottom of the sea.”

And the old gentleman got his wish, as I have learned his son never did arrive. But he had married a young wife some years before, and has a fine family by this second marriage, so that he did not need to regret, by his death, the want of an heir to his estate ; and I have always remembered

this meeting as a lesson to me how I talk to strangers again."

"I know old Gairley," answered Mr Bruce; "I have met him several times with Langline."

"I introduced him to Langline," said Wheedle. "He always visits me when in town; I expect him in Edinburgh some of these days. He is letting his farms just now; the greater part of them are out of lease next Martinmas, and he expects a very great rise, and he will get it too. I know to a certainty that he has had offers for Barnends, which is the worst ground in the whole, to the sum of five hundred pounds per annum, and the present occupier does not pay more than one hundred and fifty, but then he has been at a great deal of expence upon it; there was hardly an inclosed park when the tack was granted, and he has built a thrashing-machine, which cost him a good sum, and he proposes building a new steading

for the in-coming tenant; but what of that, it will afford it, and yield him a very handsome return for his outlay; and he is consulting Mr Langline about a number of improvements going on in several other of his farms, by which he expects to make a vast addition to their value, though there are none of them, Mr Langline tells me, so improveable as yours by one half. 'This wife of his is a very spirited woman, and goes hand in hand with him in all his improvements.'

"Did she bring him any money?" asked Mr Bruce.

"I can't tell," said Mr Wheedle, (which, by the bye, was a small lapsus, as he knew perfectly well that she was a connection of Mrs Hay's, and did not bring him one farthing); "but, whether she did or not, she has helped him to make a good deal."

Mr Wheedle had now brought the conversation to the point which he wished, and delivered a great many sage remarks

upon the rapid advance on the value of land, and the great consequence which it was to landed gentlemen not to stand upon trifles in improving their property, and adduced many instances quite in point to strengthen his argument ; and when he had got Mr Bruce's spirits elevated to a great height, by the captivating picture he drew him of the promised land, he turned to the Captain with a congratulatory smirk, and asked him if his father had shewn him the plans which Mr Langline had done of the estate of Argarnish ? And on being informed that he had never seen them, " I wonder," said he to Mr Bruce, " that you never showed the Captain the plans, they are the finest things of the kind I ever saw ; and, indeed, they are allowed by the first judges to be the best executed of any that he has done."

" They were not completely finished when I saw them myself," replied Mr Bruce. " I sent them back to Mr Lang-

line, to get something added to them, and he has not returned them to me back again."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, I forgot he sent them to me. But I'll get them immediately, they are lying in my clerk's desk, in my chambers down stairs." So saying, he rose and rung the bell. When the servant came, "Desire Mr Scraper to come to me, I want to speak to him."

Mr Scraper forthwith made his appearance, and bowing to all parties, without waiting like a ghost to be first spoken to, "I am just finishing the scroll of the bond," said he, not particularly addressing himself to any one; "and I shall be ready with it in a few minutes."

"You can bring it when you are ready, Mr Scraper," said Mr Wheedle; "we are not quite ready for it. That was not what I wanted at present, it was the plans of the Argarnish estate."

“ These beautiful plans,” replied Scraper, “ which Mr Langline sent two days ago?”

“ Yes,” answered Wheedle, “ I wished to shew them to Mr Bruce ; he has never seen them since they were completed, and Captain Bruce has not seen them at all.”

“ I am sorry,” answered Mr Scraper, “ I put them into the green box, along with the kelp papers, and the key is in my desk at home ; but I can run home and get it ; I won’t be any time, only to Patrick’s Square.”

“ That’s a mile,” said Mr Bruce.

“ It’s no distance at all,” replied Scraper, “ and I have a great coat.”

“ You may take my umbrella,” said Wheedle.

“ Does it rain ?” asked Captain Bruce.

“ Oh ! that does not signify,” said Scraper.

“ We can see them to-morrow,” said Captain Bruce. “ I don’t leave town for

a day or two, and I would not by any means wish you should get wetted."

"Aye," said the father, "let us have the bond in the first place; that's the most important at present, I suppose, Mr Wheedle, isn't it?"

"Very well, then, Mr Scraper, you can step down stairs and finish what you were about, and recollect to-morrow you don't forget to bring the key with you."

"I very seldom leave it at home, Sir; only to-night I did not think it would be wanted. I am sorry I have it not, but I shall take care to-morrow. You shall have the scroll in five minutes."

"The sooner the better, Mr Scraper," said Mr Bruce.

When Mr Scraper was gone, Mr Wheedle was beginning again to the story of the plans, when Captain Bruce cut him short, by inquiring what the nature of the bond was which he was about to put his name

to? "Because," said he, "I know so little about these matters."

"It's merely," said his father, taking up the story, "what I told you, a nominal obligation, which would not have been required but for some accidents, and which I intend to cancel the first favourable kelp season."

"Quite so," said Mr Wheedle; "entirely a matter of form; the money is not wanted up, but will be allowed to lie as long as you like. This is for money, you understand, we borrowed to carry on the improvements which your father is making on his estates, and has been every farthing laid out upon the land, and for which the gentleman has your father's personal bond. Had I had the money to lend, or could I have got it on my own account from any friend, I would have, with the utmost pleasure, accommodated Mr Bruce, had it been to double the extent, and never have required any other

security than your father's bond; but the case is otherwise, I could not command the money, and I am in the present case only an agent. The gentleman from whom the money was got wished heritable security, but, to avoid expence and trouble, I persuaded him to accept of the personal bond, which he did, on condition that your name were in it along with your father's, as, in case of death, this would prevent any additional expence, by doing away the necessity of any new bond afterwards; but I shall make Mr Scraper read the scroll, and explain it to you, and you can take it with you, and look it over at home. It will be time enough to get it extended to-morrow, only it is always best to get these things out of the way at once. You will find all exactly as I say, but satisfy yourself."

"There's no necessity for all that fuss about it," said Mr Bruce; "he can take it upon your word and mine, surely. He

knows that I have no interest separate from his ; indeed, I do not see where was the necessity for a scroll at all ; it's just the same as the old one that I signed, with the addition of his name to mine ; and if I was satisfied, who ought to know something about these matters now-a-days, he may undoubtedly without making any objections."

" I am making no objections," replied the son ; " I have no intention of making any ; all I asked was the nature and form of the obligation, or bond, or whatever name you give it, which I am to sign, as, thank God, I don't believe I ever read a law-paper in my life."

" The Captain is perfectly right," said Mr Wheedle ; " and I hope he is satisfied with the explanation I gave him. I never wish any person to sign what they do not fully understand."

" He fully understands what he is asked to sign," answered Mr Bruce. " I told him all about it before we came here, to

prevent any demur on his part. It is quite absurd, Ewan, in you now to hesitate. What do you mean by understanding the nature of the bond, unless you mean objecting to it? For my part, I think it is plain enough; you become bound, along with me, to pay this gentleman the sum of four thousand pounds, which he will never ask of you as long as I live, and which, if I die, I leave the estates to you to pay; where is there any mystery in this?"

"I know all that; I am quite satisfied upon that head, that I am to become joint security with you for the money; but where is the harm in my having explained to me the terms which I assent to when I bind myself. There may be penalties, conditions, and I don't know all what, connected with the simple fact of obligation, to none of which, be they what they may, do I mean to object. I have that entire confidence in your judgment, and in Mr Wheedle's integrity, that I can trust

implicitly to you both. But though I can do this with you, I may, in the course of my life, be differently placed ; and though this be the first, it may not be the last transaction of the kind I may be engaged in ; and I think I make no unreasonable demand, when I wish to be informed in all the minutiae of the business. You would not yourself wish me to sign a paper without reading it, or one in Coptic, or Law-Latin, which is much the same, without first having it explained. In law, I have been told, much depends upon the *form* ; now I wish to be a little up to the form."

" It is all very proper, Captain," said Mr Wheedle.

" I see no propriety in it at all," said his father ; " give me the substance, I don't care much about the form. I wonder how I should have been able to get on, had I read and pored over every paper I put my hand to, when I know who I have to deal with. And we understand each other as

to the main part of our business ; I have always left the rest to the men of business, who have studied the technical terms, and know the use of them."

Wheedle had been studying what he considered of even greater worth in his profession than the knowledge of technical terms, and of which he had found the advantage in his transactions with Mr Bruce. He had been studying the character of the young heir, who was for the first time introduced to him in the way of business, and whom he looked upon as his future client ; and he felt himself a little disappointed, on perceiving about him some indications of a disposition to examine and manage the details of his own business,—a disposition which he had carefully discouraged in the father, as beneath a man of his fortune, and incompatible with the scope which the exercise of his uncommon abilities required. When we have heard a great deal about a person of eminence, or

any body in whom we feel interested, if we have not had any description of their appearance, we commonly sketch out to ourselves a habitation for the soul of the unknown, bearing some fancied resemblance to the qualities we suppose him to possess. Thus, every body set down John Knox as a man of six feet at least, till Dr M'Crie told us he was a puny kind of a creature not much above five. Alexander the Great—nobody would have thought of him but as a handsome, fine-looking gentleman, like our Duke of York, if Quintus Curtius' picture of the wry-necked, *shauchlin* youth had not reached us.

On the other hand, when we have heard descriptions of bodies, we are as apt to go wrong in fitting them with souls congenial, as we suppose, to the unseen bodies. Mr Wheedle had committed a mistake of this last kind; he had often heard Mr Bruce speak with exultation of his fine fellow Ewan, and Mrs Bruce, with all a mother's

pride, of her handsome officer ; and he had carved out to himself, from these intimations, a fine-looking, careless, fashionable cavalry officer, who would have as little inclination to investigate musty parchments,—look over reams of red-taped records,—examine quires of accounts, or travel through porters' loads of processes,—as any other young man who had been sent to finish his education in the army. He had thought, that the very sound of deeds or securities would have reminded him of some prior engagement, and hurried him away to some place of entertainment,—certainly never broken in upon his morning promenade in Prince's Street ; and he therefore gazed at him, when he heard him talking of understanding the forms of writings, and not even hinting at any other employment in Edinburgh. He perceived, too, that his compliance with his father's desire in this transaction, was done in such a manner as to afford no flattering prognostications of his

future tractability ; he wanted, besides, that overweening fondness for his own opinion, so common to boys who have been accustomed to so much indulgence at home, and sent so early to command men,—or at least he had not discovered it ; and on this Mr Wheedle had trusted to lay the foundation of his power with the son, as he had done with the father. He saw Captain Bruce possessed too much of the old Scottish *stamen* about him, to display at once all his character ; and that it would require more than one interview to enable him to make a proper estimate of his character.

Captain Bruce, on his part, had not been an inattentive observer of Wheedle, but he had formed his opinion of him with the rapidity of youth, assisted by the previous account his mother had given him of him, and the remarks his father had unintentionally dropped. He set him down as one who justified his mother's detestation,

by the hatred he possessed for her, which was too strong for him to be able to conceal,—a malignity which arose, he believed, from her being the most formidable opponent to his schemes, and the most inaccessible to his arts,—who returned his flattery with sarcasm, and his fawning with undisguised contempt. Next to the gratification of his views upon the unentailed property of his patron, he conceived his greatest enjoyment would be the humbling of Mrs Bruce; but could he effect this in conjunction with the other, he was persuaded his satisfaction would be complete.

With these opinions of each other, Captain Bruce and Wheedle had yet a mutual desire of being upon a more intimate footing than might have been supposed. Wheedle had a very high opinion of his own powers in the management of the tempers both of himself and others, and he never doubted, but that, when better

acquainted, he would be able to discover, and turn to his advantage, the Captain's weak side ; for he was both convinced that he had one, and that he would be able to discover it. Captain Bruce hoped, in his future intercourse, that he would be able to find some method of shaking the family free from the grasp of a man whose influence over his father was not to be overturned at once, and for whom he had already imbibed some of his mother's antipathy, although he determined carefully to conceal it. Before Mr Scraper returned, both had sketched out for themselves the manœuvres they meant to practise on each other. When he came, Mr Wheedle took the bond from him, and glancing it over with much complacency,

“ It seems to be very distinctly written, Mr Scraper, I think ; is it correct ? ”

“ It's a mere scrawl, Sir, but I hope it's pretty correct. You desired me to draw it out in the common form, which I have

done, and I do not think there are any errors of much importance in it."

"Yes, it's just a very common paper, such as we are in the practice of drawing up every day; you could not go very far wrong." Here rising, and going towards Captain Bruce with it, "You have seen things of this kind before, Sir," said he to the father; "but you must allow me to give your son a little legal instruction, as he is not much conversant in these matters, and wishes to know something about the form. You will have the goodness to look it over, Captain, and I shall endeavour to explain any difficulty."

"Not I," said the Captain; "I could make nothing of it from a mere glance."

"If you are perfectly satisfied that it is accurately drawn, Mr Scraper," said Mr Bruce, "you had just better get it extended, and my son and I will call back to-morrow morning, when you can read it

over to him before signing; it is unnecessary to put off time with it at present."

"It won't put off many minutes, my dear Sir," said Wheedle; "and, if you are not in all the greater hurry, I think Mr Scraper had better read it now to the Captain, and see if he has any observations to make; this is the time, it would not do to spoil stamp paper."

"It seems the most natural way, to read it both now and after," said the Captain.

"That is what I always advise my clients to do," said Wheedle, "first in the scroll for observation, and after it is extended for comparison. But your father sometimes, indeed I may say almost always, wishes me to save him that trouble; this is however so short he will not be long detained; and I am always more pleased when I can persuade him to attend himself, for then it takes a part of the responsibility off my shoulders."

Without any further remarks on either side, Mr Scraper was desired by Mr Wheedle to read over the document ; who, clearing his pipe, and adjusting his neck-cloth, run over as follows : “ Know all men,” &c. the simplest form of a simple obligation. When done, Mr Wheedle begged to have the honour of introducing Captain Bruce to Mrs Wheedle and his family.

Mrs Wheedle, who had the advantage of her husband in point of age, by at least a round dozen, had been in her youth a woman of a commanding figure, to which she had got attached a face cast in one of nature’s most ordinary moulds, a little elongated. The skin, of the colour of the chesnut, was honeycombed by the small pox. Her hair, naturally black, and lank as a Patagonian’s, to whom she bore some resemblance in stature, was tortured into curls over her projecting forehead, which, now seamed into wrinkles, like the folds of a pair of

bellows, beat time to the movement of two lips, through whose shrivelled aperture Famine might not have disdained to have blown mildew; but she could boast of Right Honourables among her connections, and the opportune deaths of a brother and nephew in India, had given her still stronger claims to general respect, about the time when Mr Wheedle's attentions first ripened into love. Her mind was masculine, but not cultivated; and she thoroughly understood what was due by Mr Wheedle to the rank of the family from which she had sprung, and to herself, for deigning to unite her blood and fortune with a scribe, whose genealogical tree could not be traced beyond one or two of the lowest ramifications. The family consisted of a pretty little girl, a niece, whom Mrs Wheedle had adopted, after her own marriage-bed had become, according to appearance, and the ordinary course of nature, irredeemably sterile.

Mrs Wheedle received Mr Bruce and his son with the greatest courtesy; expressed her regret at not having had the pleasure of seeing Mrs Bruce and Miss Bruce since they came to town, and concluded by expressing her anxious desire to have the honour of their company at her house, some day before the Captain left town, which Mr Bruce readily agreed to, and the Captain, after repeated solicitations, also was induced to promise.

After they were returned home, Captain Bruce, who had been pondering over the paper which he had heard read at Mr Wheedle's, was struck with the circumstance of the whole money mentioned in the bond having been said by Mr Wheedle to have been already expended upon the estate, and what his father had told him before, of so much being still wanted to complete his plans, before the estates would begin to yield any return, and requested an explanation of the difficulty from his

father, who told him that it would only require a little assistance from his mother to help him to go on, and satisfy Mr Langline, till next rents became due. Ewan was far from being satisfied either with the plan or explanation, but as he could get no other, he was obliged to desist from urging his father farther upon the subject; and next day he went to Mr Wheedle's and signed the bond.

The plans of the estates, which consisted of one part exhibiting the grounds as they stood originally, divided into small steadings, and another as they would appear when turned into extensive sheep walks, and large improved farms, inclosed with walls and hedges, and surrounded with belts of planting, were produced, beautifully drawn and coloured, ornamented with elevations of the houses and offices, like gentlemen's seats; an explanation accompanied them, to which was appended a statement of the old, and the cheering a-

mount of expected rents, by which it appeared plain to demonstration, that the advantages to be reaped would be immense. Mr Bruce and the other gentlemen having contemplated the plans, and praised them as they deserved for lovely drawings, Mr Wheedle read over and explained the statements, which the old gentleman praised with no less rapture; and turning round to the Captain, asked him what he thought of them?

“I think,” replied he, “they are as admirably drawn out as the plans, and as highly coloured.”

“Extremely well! I owe you one for that, Captain,” said Mr Wheedle; and, laughing heartily, turned off the remark as a good joke. The Captain could not help observing, although he said nothing, that there was not a word in the whole about the fall of the kelp, or the failure of the farmers.

CHAP. VIII.

Whose property is it? Is it mine?—

We'll talk about it.—ALCHYMIST.

A DAY or two after the transaction mentioned in the last chapter was finished, the whole of Mr Bruce's family seemed to have regained their lost chearfulness. Mr Bruce appeared quite happy when at home, which, however, was but seldom, as he had a number of old acquaintances to see, whom he had neglected in his long absence; Mrs Bruce, her daughter, and her son, were engaged in constant parties, visiting or receiving visits; and not a word dropped from any of them respecting

what had passed, or a hint which could imply the existence of any disagreeable feeling.

The Captain had paid several visits to Mr Wheedle, and had always been received so frankly, and treated with so much openness, that he began to waver in the opinion he had formed respecting him, and to think that he had been too rash in taking it up. Mrs Wheedle, who had a pride in seeing people of family coming about her husband, and who had besides a sort of prepossession in favour of Captain Bruce, both from his manners and appearance, unbent so much in his company, and contrived to throw so much well-bred complaisance into her behaviour, that she insensibly overcame the repugnance he had felt for Wheedle's wife as an acquaintance for his sister; and he persuaded Miss Bruce occasionally to accompany him to the House in the Square, as Mrs Bruce always termed it. The insinuating atten-

tion of both to the brother and sister was unremitting, and contributed to soften rapidly any little ruggedness which had obtruded at their first intercourse ; so that, could Mrs Bruce's aversion have been overcome, both the families might have been upon easy visiting terms. But this was impossible ; it increased daily, and that in proportion as she saw herself likely to stand alone in her opposition. She could with great difficulty be prevailed upon to preserve the rules of good breeding to Mrs Wheedle when she occasionally called, but never would condescend to return a visit.

The economy of Mrs Wheedle's domestic household government was of a different description from that of Mrs Bruce. She never condescended to argue any subject with her husband, but delivered her instructions with an authority which admitted of no dispute ; on his part, he never ventured to assert a rule, which one or

two bickerings, during the honeymoon, had shown him was even then limited, and which the want of an heir had latterly contributed entirely to set aside. But though affairs stood thus in private, in public Mrs Wheedle paid an attention almost bordering upon obsequiousness to her lord, whose opinion, even on the most trifling matters, she ostentatiously asked, and received with an apparent humility truly edifying. Nor could she suffer any disrespect to be shown to Mr Wheedle; this she considered as an insult offered herself in the most tender point,—that of questioning the propriety of her matrimonial choice. On one subject they were both completely of the same mind, and that harmonised all lesser objects. Both wished to exalt the name of Wheedle, and both considered this end so holy, that it sanctified every possible means; and this being the object of Mr Wheedle's incessant pursuit, and her anxiety, it formed

the common subject of their deliberations, and their mutual communications were wholly unreserved. She was, of course, much better acquainted with the nature and extent of Mr Bruce's embarrassments than his own wife, and the aid which Mr Wheedle had from time to time afforded, and she could not brook the undisguised haughtiness with which Mrs Bruce received all the advances she made her. But she looked forward with a degree of grim pleasure to the time, which she verily believed fast coming, when she should be the person courted by the Bruce family; and to effect this desired triumph, she practised the more carefully upon the younger branches.

Had the Captain not at first imbibed the idea that the whole of the attention shewn him proceeded from self-interested motives, the plan of Wheedle, seconded so ably by his wife, might perhaps have completely succeeded, and he, most pro-

bably, would only have appeared upon the scene again to sign away the family estates, or to curse in obscurity the ascendant of his legal instructors. For the antipathy of Mrs Bruce was so strong, that it did not rest satisfied with real causes of dislike, but in things indifferent in themselves, or even praise-worthy, she found subject for quarrel, if they bore any connection to the hated family. And thus the just grounds of her dislike were under-rated, because, in some instances, she carried that dislike to too great a length ; in the same manner as an honest clergyman in the west, at the time when Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine had the audacity to call in question the infallibility of the General Assembly, and avow a greater respect for the Acts of the Apostles, than for the Acts of the venerable Fathers of the said Kirk, being violent in argument with a gentleman, who was not quite so faithful a son of the church, as to surrender the right of

private opinion even to their sacred authority, his snuff becoming exhausted, for the vehemence of his declamation had excited the appetite of his nose, sent for a supply, and proceeding with vigour, had demonstrated the exceeding sinfulness of separation from the Establishment entirely to his own satisfaction, and the staggering of his antagonist, when the servant, who had gone for the snuff, returned, and presented it in a paper. He thrust his fingers into it with as much eagerness as Napoleon did his into his empty gold box, when the Saxons gave back at the battle of Leipsic; and stuffing both nostrils till his eyes glistened with delight, exclaimed, "Ey, that's fine snuff; whare did you get it, my man?" "I got it, Sir," replied the boy, "at Andrew Moncrieff's, the Seceder; there's nae ither shop open the day, for it's the kirk fast." Without uttering one word in answer, the reverend gentleman walked towards the fire, and committed

the delight of his nose to the flames, at the same time carefully cleansing the instrument of his guilty gratification from schismatical pollution, by sounding his trumpet with apostolical energy; then turning round to the person with whom he had been arguing, "You see," said he, with great bitterness, "to what length the Seceders will gang,—they are turned already; they dinna even respect our fast days." Though Mrs Bruce was not quite so undistinguishing in her animosity, yet she was sufficiently so to produce an effect opposite to what she intended; she weakened the cause she so violently espoused.

But the Captain's suspicions had been awakened, and he was not to be so easily lulled. And though Mr Wheedle might have been called by his mother worse than he really was, yet he was placed in a situation sufficiently trying to justify the most scrupulous looking after, even though no possible suspicion could

attach to his name. While he partook of Mr Wheedle's hospitality, and frequented his occasional evening parties, he never entirely lost sight of his main object. Mr Wheedle, however, contrived always some excuse or other, to avoid inquiries; and his father, who appeared satisfied in having gained his present end, was so much engaged in plans of improvement, that he had not time to spend in examining accounts; for, besides his own improvements, Mr Wheedle had taken great care to find him both amusement and employment, in the plans and projects of about a dozen gentlemen, who did him the honour to consult him. But the time was approaching when his leave of absence would expire, and if he returned to his corps, without obtaining what he wanted now, he might not have it in his power to attend a second summons. He therefore took an opportunity, one morning in a pretty long conversation with Mr Wheedle, to state his apprehen-

sions respecting the state of his father's affairs, and told him that he wished to consult him as a friend about the best method of clearing away the incumbrances; and begged at the same time that he would candidly tell him whether the improvements were really improvements, and worth the money expended upon them. Mr Wheedle, in reply, was not perfectly prepared to answer Captain Bruce's queries; there certainly was a very considerable debt upon the estate, but the land was rapidly rising in value, and the neighbouring estates had nearly doubled the amount of their rentals, and he did not doubt but his would do the same; only it would be necessary to raise some money on the entailed property, in order to finish them.

“ In plain language, then, I am to understand,” said the Captain, “ that all the free property which my father had is involved, and in order to go on, money

must be had by burdening the entailed property."

"I do not exactly say so," answered Mr Wheedle; "but certainly, if you could prevail on your mother to join in an obligation, it would be the easiest method of relieving us at present out of our difficulties. But to enable you to judge for yourself, I shall desire Mr Scaper to shew you all the papers, and I shall be ready to give you whatever assistance you require; and I hope, before you leave town, we will be able to come to some arrangements agreeable to all parties."

Mr Scaper was immediately summoned; and all the three proceeded to the chambers, which were situated down stairs, in the sunk storey. They consisted of two rooms, the one in front spacious, but dark, being only lighted by one window, and that ribbed with iron, similar to the grating used for securing the dens of other ravenous beasts of prey; it was covered

on three sides with presses and boxes, and on the fourth with an iron safe and book-rack. At an old fir desk sat three young men writing, who, the moment the door opened, stopped looking at the papers before them, and turned their sallow faces to gaze, with impudent booby curiosity, upon the stranger; but perceiving him accompanied by their master, one resumed his occupation, another began nibbling at his pen, and the third opening his desk, looked into it eagerly, then, after deranging a few loose papers, shut it again with affected impatience, as if he had been disappointed in his search after some important paper, and went giggling to the window, to admire a jet d'eau formed in the area by the bursting of the water-pipe. After shewing Captain Bruce several boxes which contained papers relating to the Argarnish estate, they proceeded to a back-room, considerably lighter, where Mr Scraper usually sat by himself, except when Mr

Wheedle honoured him with his presence; and here several huge bundles were produced, so voluminous, that by the time they could get the titles read, without so much as looking at the contents, it was dinner-hour. This exhibition fully satisfied Captain Bruce of the impossibility of his being able to do any thing towards examining the records himself in detail; and after consulting with Mr Wheedle, it was agreed that Mr Scraper should make out an abstract for his information.

When he came home he found his father, who was disengaged that evening, relapsed into his former state of gloomy taciturnity, and his mother in a state of agitation, which evidently shewed they had been enjoying one of the old tete-a-tetes. Mr Bruce had that morning received a letter from Mr Langline, containing a demand for a considerable sum, and an intimation that he meant to be in Edinburgh in a few days, when he expected to

receive it; and he had, in consequence, again applied to Mrs Bruce, urging her to assist him, which she absolutely refused, unless the papers which she was required to sign were subjected to the inspection of her man of business. Indeed, they had just finished a very animated debate, which ended as debates of that kind commonly do, in the entire conviction of both parties that *my* side of the question is the right one, and that *you* will never listen to reason.

Mrs Bruce was the first who broke silence after the entrance of her son. She began by ironically complimenting her son on the honourable acquaintance that he had formed for himself and his sister at Mr Wheedle's, which would soon receive a valuable addition in the person of Mr Langline, who was daily expected, as his father had informed her at last, when his necessities, which she had both foreseen and warned him of frequently before, had

compelled him to be a little communicative to her. "But," added she, "when these wretches, whose flattery is degradation, who would stoop to the meanest offices to accomplish the basest of purposes, shall have completed the ruin which you, Ewan, in opposition to my earnest entreaties, are forward to assist, you will then both perceive the propriety of my refusing to lend my aid. And I here most solemnly declare, that no consideration upon earth shall ever induce me to consent to a single *bodle* of the Bruce property going to aggrandise two such ungrateful upstarts as Wheedle or Langline; it is therefore needless again to say a word on the subject, unless you are prepared, in the most unreserved manner, to consult with Mr Cousland, a gentleman both by birth and education, to whom you can have no possible objection, except that he will not stoop to humour you, in order to rob you." Having said this, she, without waiting for

a reply, which neither Mr Bruce nor Ewan attempted, left the room.

“ You see,” said Mr Bruce, when she was gone, “ how I am situated ; your mother will not comply with the most reasonable demands. Now, had I only other two thousand pounds, I would be perfectly at ease, and I would be completely free from any obligation to any body.”

“ But why,” said Ewan, “ should you refuse to allow Mr Cousland to see the papers ; there can be no great harm in consulting him ?”

“ One writer,” answered Mr Bruce, “ never likes to have his accounts and papers put into the hands of another.”

“ I should have thought they would never have objected to that. I have often heard it remarked, that they work to one another’s hands ; and I know the belief is so common, that it has become a proverb, “ One writer in a town may starve, but if there are two they get rich.” Their wares

are very unlike every other kind of merchandize, they rise by competition; the more plenty the more costly."

"But there happens to be an unfortunate quarrel between Mr Wheedle and Mr Cousland; they will hardly speak to each other; they will never consult. Indeed Wheedle said, if I wished to employ Mr Cousland he had no objections, but he could have nothing to do when he was engaged; and I am so circumstanced with Mr Wheedle, that I cannot abruptly break with him; and notwithstanding what your mother says, he is very obliging. I shall at any rate consult with him before I proceed, for he does not know that Langline has made any demand."

CHAP. IX.

I made a *false step*.——MONIMIA.

Oh ! *Bias*, how hast thou *beast* me ?

I hate a pun.——SCRIBLERIUS.

NEXT morning Mr Bruce, accompanied by his son, left Queen's Street soon after breakfast to proceed to Mr Wheedle's, in order to consult him in this new demand. In passing along, as they were about to turn up the short street leading to the Square, and were in close conversation together, they were accosted by an elderly gentleman, in a double-necked dreadnought, booted and spurred, and bearing on his garments, of which it was impossible to distinguish the colour, the rough

tokens of deep roads, and of a thorough acquaintance with the face of the country. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, almost every vestige of humanity had been obliterated, and he limped forward, a moving pyramid of mud. With a bow not unlike the obeisance of a dancing bear, and in a tone only rather milder than the notes of the same savage, when cudgelled by his leader, he roared out, "Do you see me, Gentlemen? Did you ever see the like of me?"

"Not often, I must confess," said the Captain.

"By G—, if there be law in Scotland to be had, I'll have it. Only look at me! that new great coat, the first time I ever had it on my back,—but my back's broken, and so is my leg, I believe,—can you show me a lawyer's?"

"You had better go to a surgeon's, I think," said the Captain, "if you be in such a plight."

“ It’s a d——d shame to have such cursed pits open, and not a bit of stick to keep a person out. How do your magistrates allow it? what are they good for?”

“ Not much, I believe,” said the Captain, “ if they don’t look after the streets, and see that they are safe to go upon.”

“ If I had broke my neck, where would I have been? but I’ll have the law. And I have lost my whip too; it cost me three shillings and sixpence this very morning.”

“ Mr Gairley, if I am not mistaken,” said Mr Bruce, stepping forward; “ I did not at first recognise you in that state. I am exceedingly sorry to observe you in that garb; how did you meet with the accident?”

“ Mr Bruce,”—replied Mr Gairley, “ I do not wonder that you hardly know me; I have got such an infernal tumble, I thought I was killed outright. I was looking for the entry to the Square, and being a stranger, I did not at the same time think

of looking at my feet, when down I was precipitated into the found of a new house they are digging, and which they have left without any thing to keep a person out, or any body to give warning to passengers, during the time the workmen are gone to breakfast; but, if it should cost me a round sum, I am determined I shall not let this pass; I'll have swinging damages off them."

"If you will go to my house," answered Mr Bruce, "it is at no great distance, my son will show you the road, you will get yourself shifted and dried. I am sorry I am engaged, but if you can wait a little, I shall come to you as soon as I am disengaged."

Mr Gairley thanked him, but said he would wish to see a man of business first. "You can do that after," said Mr Bruce; "you will be the better for being dried; and then, if you like, my son can bring

you to Mr Wheedle's, where you will find me."

"The very gentleman," said Gairley, "I wanted to see. That will suit me to a T."

On which they parted, Mr Bruce for Mr Wheedle's, and his son and Mr Gairley to get the latter made somewhat like a Christian. "Don't you think I had best return and see after my whip?" said Mr Gairley, as they went along; "it's needless for me to leave that to the rascals."

The Captain offered to go back, and desire the men to look for it, while they went to get him put to rights, but this he would not hear of; so back he returned to the scene of his misfortune, attended by the Captain. It was a trench nearly twenty feet deep, with some large sharp-edged stones sunk in water at the bottom; the sides, moistened with the rain, retained still some marks of Gairley's descent, and in one or two places he had excavated

pretty sizeable holes in the loose earth, by the clutches he had made in his endeavours to retard his progress downwards. A number of large stones, some partly hewn, were lying about the edges.

“What a mercy I did not pull down one of these after me,” said Gairley, as he eyed them. “Are you not astonished, Captain, how I got out alive from such a place?”

“And would you really think of going down again, Mr Gairley, for a three shillings and sixpence whip? I’d rather lose a dozen.”

“Aye, you’re like all thoughtless young men, Captain; but three shillings and sixpence is not to be picked up at one’s foot every day.”

“I wonder you didn’t think of bringing it up when you was down at any rate. I can’t say I think the road so very inviting, as to tempt one to go a second time for the pleasure of the walk.”

“ I was so dumfounded, Sir, by the suddenness of the shock, that I was glad to get out, without thinking of any thing. And, as I can’t well be dirtier than I am, I see no advantage in letting my whip lie at the bottom.”

Mr Gairley was about to descend the second time, when Captain Bruce, observing a chairman coming, beckoned him, and pulling back Mr Gairley, told Donald that that gentleman had met with an accident in the found, and lost his whip, and desired him to go down and search for it.

“ O aye, Sir, thae founds are no chancy things at a’ ; a poor lassie was ta’en out o’ that ane to the Infirmary the ither night, unco sair bruised, and I hinna heard if she be dead or no.”

“ And do the magistrates do nothing in that case,” said Gairley.

“ Ou, what can they do, Sir, it’s the election time, and it’s the deacon at’s buildin ?” The chairman then descended

by the road used by the masons, and with some difficulty found the whip, which he brought up and delivered to Captain Bruce, who gave it to Gairley; who, as soon as he received it, turned on his heel, and was walking off. The chairman, with his hat held a little above his head, moved up in front, and “houpit his honour wadna grudge him a saxpence for his trouble, as he had gotten himsel a’ dirty, and it was a noble whup.”

“A sixpence! for what, Sir? I went down myself for nothing.”

“Ou, your honour’s joking, you’ll never grudge a poor body a saxpence.”

“The devil a sixpence, Sir, you’ll get from me; go and get it from the scoundrel of a deacon, that, I suppose, is away getting himself drunk, and neglecting his business, for this election.”

“That’s nae business o’ mine, Sir; but if I had thought I was to get naething for my pains, your whup, an’ yoursel baith,

might hae lain till the day o' judgment, till I wad lifted you."

Captain Bruce, who saw Mr Gairley about to reply, and who did not admire town eclogues, put a sixpence into the chairman's hands, and led off Mr Gairley, followed for about a yard by the "Thank you, Sir, thank you, Sir," of the grateful Highlander.

"What, an imposing rascal that fellow is," said Gairley, putting his hand into his breeches pocket, "to ask sixpence for merely going down and fetching up my whip, a service which any of our country boys would have been proud of performing for nothing; nay, they would have tried who would have been first to have offered their services; but in this town there is nothing done without money. If you send a message, however short the distance, you can't give less than sixpence; if you get the smallest parcel brought,—a sixpence. I can't tell the

money it costs me when I come to Edinburgh, just for these trifling things." And he went on thus moralizing, till he came to Mr Bruce's house, but never once thought of drawing his hand out of his pocket, where he had kept it all the while, with a sixpence trembling between his finger and thumb, half hesitating whether he should offer to repay Captain Bruce, till the Captain rung the bell at his father's door; and the money dropping to the bottom of his pocket, he drew out the hand empty, and walked in along with his conductor.

When Mr Gairley had laid aside his great coat, he found that it had preserved all his under raiment from damage excepting his boots, which were committed to a servant's care to get cleaned; and pushing his feet into a pair of slippers, "I believe," said he, "after all, that I have been more afraid than hurt by that vile tumble. The careless fellows deserve to be soundly

soused for their inattention ; I'll see what Mr Wheedle says, when we get there. He's a very sensible man, Mr Wheedle ; your father and he are acquainted, I see."

" Yes," replied the Captain, " a little ; he is getting very rapidly forward, I am told."

" He's a clever money-making fellow ; it certainly must be a very lucrative business, the writer trade ; whoever may make bad debts, they take care they make none. You would think a landlord ought to be as secure as any body, when he can always keep the hypothec in his own hand, but I find very much difficulty in getting my rents ; and this last year I shall be considerably behind, after all my care. But you're a young man, and don't know any thing about these matters yet ; wait till you arrive at your father's age or mine, and have a family to look after, you'll be better acquainted with the troubles and difficulties

of life. It's an easy thing to spend, when young men have indulgent parents, who keep them up liberally, and give them whenever they want. I know what it is to answer their orders."

"Sir?" said Captain Bruce, looking interrogatively in his face.

Mr Gairley understood it, and continued, "I don't mean you, Captain; I never heard that you were expensive. No, Sir, I am very far from insinuating any thing of that kind; but I had a son who was in the army, who cost me a good deal of money. But, poor fellow," pulling down the sleeve of his black coat, and looking ruefully at the cuff, "*that* I never thought of,—the expence was the least of it,—though I'll never see a farthing. No, Captain, the money never troubled me, when I heard of the poor fellow's being lost. He was——"

What he was Mr Gairley never got time to tell. Whether he intended, ac-

according to the benevolent old maxim, to speak no ill of the dead, or whether he intended to be more rigidly just to the memory of his son, must now be left to the conjectures of the learned, for Mr Brucc, entering, cut short his speech with “ I am glad to find, Mr Gairley, my son has been able to relieve you of a little of your load.”

“ Aye,” said the Captain, “ he does not look quite so like a *landed* proprietor, as when we met him.”

“ No, you have done him a truly filial office,” replied Mr Bruce ; “ you have lessened his interest in the soil.”

“ Then he’ll return with fewer incumbrances,” retorted the Captain ; “ and that’s a very uncommon case with country gentlemen, when they leave Edinburgh.”

“ I do not think so,” said Mr Gairley ; “ it’s a very common case with me ; I always get rid of any superfluous bank notes,

that I do not know what to do with in the country."

"You're a lucky man," said Mr Bruce; "but, pray, what has brought you to town? is it the letting of your farms? Mr Wheedle was telling me you are going to get all your rents raised."

These good standard jokes being played off, Mr Gairley informed the father and son, that he had come to Edinburgh, in consequence of a most enormous demand which had been made upon him by Mr Langline, surveyor and improver, for several plans which he had drawn for him, and of which he was determined to contest payment; and that he intended to consult Wheedle upon the business, as he had recommended this Langline. Then pulling out, from the side pocket of his coat, a large bundle of papers, he selected one of four folio pages, with which he proceeded, "To survey, &c. drawing out plans, &c. measurement, &c. to trouble, &c.; why,

the scoundrel, I kept him full three weeks at my own table,—trouble ! What do you think, Mr Bruce, he wanted me to turn a rabbit warren into a sheep farm, and a parcel of nonsense of that kind ; and because I would not agree to destroy my estates, he, forsooth, must send me in an account of this kind ? And then there's a swinging one of Wheedle's attending the roup ;—aye, he did something for that. Well, let me fairly out of these lawyers hands, and if I ever get into them again—but sometimes they are necessary evils ; at any rate, I would rather deal with lawyers than improvers."

" But what do you think of *both*, Mr Gairley ?" said the Captain.

" Both !" exclaimed the Laird ; " that's between the Devil and the deep sea.—Both !"

Young Bruce, observing his father look extremely sour at his remark, did not press the subject, but wishing Mr Gairley

deliverance from all his misfortunes, the old gentleman shortly after withdrew, to seek his remedy.

When he was gone, Mr Bruce informed his son, that Mr Wheedle had communicated to him the very unpleasant intelligence, that Saunders M'Lauchlan, his uncle's servant, had been found out by Mrs Cameron's agent, to whom he had delivered the will, and all the documents necessary to prove the title of his brother's daughter to her father's estates, and also to call him to account for his intromissions, which, owing to the circumstances alluded to, he found it impossible to comply with, unless by his son's concurring with him, and burdening the entail.

This information came like a death-blow upon Ewan. He had hoped and wished that this last step might have been avoided, as he foresaw in it the ruin of all the dearest, fondest dreams, in which his imagination had delighted to indulge. He saw himself

reduced to a captain's pay, at least during the lives of parents for whom he had the most filial regard ; and his thoughts instantly flew to Edinmouth, Miss Stewart, and Beaton ; and his heart sunk within him, when he thought of the advantages his rival, as he imagined Beaton to be, would have over himself, now that he might alone be considered as a poor military adventurer. His thoughts became indistinct, confused, and almost intolerable ; and he remained silently gazing at his father, who was waiting with apparent tranquillity for a reply, and looking stedfastly at the speaking countenance of his son. At last the father broke silence.

“ I doubt, Ewan, I have been duped by both Langline and Wheedle ; I wish I had had a little of Mr Gairley's caution ; I fear I am involved past remedy. What will your mother say to me for rejecting all her wise counsels.”

Ewan was about to reply, when Mr

Beaton was announced, the very last of men he would have chosen to meet, had the meeting been optional. But, as it was, he introduced him to his father, and requesting him to be seated, inquired kindly after all the friends at Bowerbank and Edinmouth; which inquiries being answered, Mr Beaton requested a private interview with the Captain for a few minutes; and his father telling them his room was at their service, they withdrew accordingly.

CHAP. X.

———Where Nature's hand

Had careless strewed the rocks, a dreadful cave,

Whose concave ceiling echoed to the floods

Their hollow murmurs on the trembling shore,

Demanded our approach.

FERGUSSON.

To account for Mr Beaton's appearance, it will be necessary to inform our readers of some occurrences which had taken place at Edinmouth, after Captain Bruce left it for Edinburgh.

The Bathers had in general departed, and Miss Stewart, as was intended, accompanied Mrs Comyns and Miss Bruce to Bowerbank, where for the present we shall leave her, under the soothing care of her two friends, till we bring to a *finale* the adventures of some others of our old acquaint-

ances, the termination of whose smuggling exploits were, by a coincidence of circumstances, connected with the developement of Miss Stewart's fortunes.

It was now drawing near the Equinox, and one stormy evening, after night-fall, Thomson and Henry were busily engaged at a game of draughts, Mrs Thomson sitting with her work beside them, but oftener casting her eye towards the board than upon her seam, for the players were now reduced to three men each ; in this last effort of skill, her husband had got his opponent driven into a corner, where he was endeavouring to close him up, when a violent gust of wind, which shook the house, accompanied with a fierce rattle of hail upon the panes of the window, made the good woman involuntarily turn her eyes to heaven, and exclaim,

“ God bless all ships at sea ! ”

“ Amen,” said the Captain mechanically, and shoving up one of his men. “ Take

that, my boy ; now I think you're done for."

" I believe this is your's," answered Martin, putting his men into disorder ; " Now for the conqueror."

" You've played enough for ae night," said Mrs Thomson, pleased that her husband remained victor ; " do you hear what a stormy night this is gotten up ? I wonder whare Stent Tiller 'll be the night ?"

" Safe enough, I warrant you," replied the husband ; " he has got a good boat, and he's a good seaman, with a good crew ; what are you vexing yourself about a capful of wind,—never mind Stent Tiller."

" Well said, old boy ; never mind Stent Tiller."

" Bless me, it's himsel !" from Mrs Thomson, announced to Martin that a stranger, who had just entered, was the veritable long expected Captain of the Lugger.

" An' whare hae ye come frae in sic a night as this ?" continued the Lady. " Ye

maun pit aff that great big watch coat o' yours, it's a' dreepin o' weet, and sit down, and let's hear what's keepit you sae lang."

"That I'll do by and bye," replied the rough sailor; "but in the mean time, uncle, I want to speak with you, if you'll step into one of your state-rooms."

"You needn't mind Mr Martin," said Captain Thomson, "he's one of ourselves; he's engaged for next trip, and understands the French lingo, and all that. But what have you made of the Hazard?"

"Brought her up, and 'livering her at the Devil's Kitchen as fast as we can drive. I hope to get clear of all, and be ready to work her in to-morrow by day-light; I just came up to see how the land lies. I've got her all new painted and disguised, and could pass her off as a foreigner, but I'm told that won't do; so I'll just bring her round as the old Hazard, and try to get the goods brought from the Kitchen the best way we can."

“ There’s nothing else to be done. We must go to M’Groul’s, and see how that’s to be managed ; Mr Martin may go along with us. This is the young gentleman,” introducing him to Tiller, “ I wrote you about.”

“ Beg pardon, shipmate,” said Tiller, stepping up to Henry, and holding out his hand ; “ I hope we’ll be better acquainted after a bit. But, come along, I can’t stay, for I must down again to our lads, as quick as I can, and see how they come on. I’ll see you to-morrow, aunt.”

Proceeding towards Duncan’s forthwith, they surprised the old gentleman pondering over one of his favourite volumes, which was however speedily laid aside ; and without preamble they entered upon the discussion of more important topics. The result of their deliberations was, that the Kitchen being now not so secure as formerly, the sooner the articles were removed from it the better. Duncan hinted too, in the

course of conversation, that even his own fair fame might not exempt his cellars from search, in case of suspicion; and therefore, the best plan would be to get them forwarded to Rough Struan's with all convenient speed, where, happen what would, they knew the worst, which was the loss of the articles. Duncan advised Stent to get his vessel round as soon and as cannily as possible, and next evening he would have carts provided, for the purpose of carrying away what they could; the management of the rest, the loading, &c. he would leave with Captain Tiller. These matters adjusted, Tiller proceeded for the cave, Thomson and Martin homeward, and Mr M'Groul dispatched a trusty messenger, with directions to Struan to have his sons and the carts at a place appointed, by midnight next night.

The Devil's Kitchen was a cave, accessible only by sea, for the purposes of either landing or removing goods. The mouth

was formed by a fissure in the rock, abreast of which a boat, at full tide, could load or unload, and this only when the weather was somewhat moderate, or the wind blew from the west off the coast. On the land side the descent was precipitous and abrupt, and never attempted except by the sailors, when a strong north-east wind rendered it impossible to approach it by water.

The Hazard was brought into Edinmouth early next tide, some of the crew having been left in the cave along with the articles, to wait the arrival of their associates in the night. Every thing was accordingly prepared; the carts were got ready, and Henry was to accompany Stent and Captain Thomson, to observe the nature of the business; but, as the tide began to make, the wind got up, and from a breeze it at last blew a perfect hurricane.

“ I don’t think, Tiller,” said Thomson, as he was hesitatingly looking at his watch coat, “ that we’ll be able to get to the cave

to-night; the boat 'll never live in the surf; —it blows great guns."

"I'll try it, however, blow what it may," replied the nephew.

"My dear," said Mrs Thomson to her husband, "you must not attempt any such thing, it wad be just throwin awa your life to nae purpose. What's the value o' a wee pickle goods? we can get mair. Na, na, Stent, I never liket this kind o' business, you're far owre regardless; but mind your uncle has a wife, though ye hae nane."

"I can't leave the men there a second night," answered Stent; "and then Struan's carts, what's to be done with them? besides, this is the best night possible, there 'll be no cruisers afloat in such a night as this. My uncle and Mr Martin may go round by the land side, I don't ask them to go with me; but I bet one to a dozen I am there before them."

"May be, may be," added the affec-

tionate woman ; “ I’m no keen about the land side neither, it’s but slippery fittin at best ; an if ye wad tak my advice, ye wad a’ stay at hame thegither, an’ no risk yourselves ony way.”

“ *I* must go,” said Tiller firmly ; “ there’s no more words need be said about that ; as to my uncle, and his friend there, they may do as they like.”

“ There’s no great danger by the Craigs, I think,” said Thomson, “ if we keep a good look out, and a fast hold. What say you, Mr Martin ?”

Martin, who would very willingly have seconded Mrs Thomson’s arguments, was ashamed to display any symptoms of cowardice ; though his head grew giddy at the very thought of the precipice, did not allow himself to acknowledge his fears, but, apparently courageous, said he had no objections ; and Mrs Thomson not interfering further in the way of remonstrance, Tiller took his departure to muster his

hands, and try to weather the point, while Thomson and Martin, buckling themselves up in their great coats, prepared to face the storm, and descend by the Craigs.

By the Kalendar it ought to have been full moon, but the clouds had so obscured the sky, that when Martin and the Captain set out upon their journey, her feeble and uncertain rays were scarcely sufficient to afford them light to trace the path they meant to pursue; the storm, which at intervals drove the clouds from her face, roaring like the blast of a smelting furnace, rendered it almost impossible for them to hear what one said to the other. When they came to the brink, Martin felt horror-struck. The flitting moon-beam lighted the tremendous precipice, while the shadows of the projecting cliffs threw a dark and undefinable horror over the descent. The swell of the German ocean, and its roar thundering at the foot of the rocks, almost

completely overwhelmed him ;—but it was now too late to talk of returning.

“ Follow me,” said the Captain, “ and take care of your feet.”

Martin, shaking in every limb, and hardly able to answer, allowed himself instinctively to follow, and they began to descend. They had nearly reached the bottom, when a loud noise, accompanied with a cry—“ Oh ! my God !” followed by a plunge in the water, completely took away the remaining sensations of poor Henry ; he let go his hold, and dropped wholly insensible. When he regained his recollection, he found himself seated in the cave, then Captain bathing his temples with gin, and surrounded by half a dozen rough but sympathising faces, and Tiller with a small tin jug in his hand, containing the liquid they were applying to his temples, which, as soon as Martin had shewn signs of returning animation, he was strongly advised

to apply internally ; having done so, he was soon sufficiently recovered to learn the manner of his escape. A part of the Craig which had given way below him, produced the noise which he imagined to have been the annunciation of his friend's fate, and which Thomson had thought to have proceeded from Martin's too precipitate descent, when he uttered the exclamation which had terrified him. Tiller, however, having arrived before them, and thinking they rather delayed coming, was upon the out-look, and was luckily at hand when Martin did really fall into the water, and with some difficulty succeeded in rescuing him, though not without several pretty considerable bruises.

The night continued so boisterous, that it was deemed prudent not to risk taking away any of the goods at that time ; and the wind falling a little about the turn of the tide, Henry was removed by water

back to Edinmouth, and put under the care of Mrs Thomson, to recover from the effect of his unfortunate expedition; with whom we shall leave him for a day or two, ruminating upon his still unlucky fate, as he termed what almost every one else, who knew any thing about it, called a miraculous escape.

CHAP. XI.

Paint Scotland greetin' owre her thistle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whistle,
An' d——d Excisemen in a bustle,
Seizin' a stell.

Triumphant crushin't like a mussel,
Or lampet shell.

BURNS.

MR CAIRNEY, whom we had the honour of introducing to our readers at the end of the first volume of this our history, had got his farm, and every thing else, settled completely according to his mind. His friend M'Groul, though he would do nothing in the way of partnership in the distillery, for he didna like to rin owre mony risks, yet gave him his advice, and bought his whisky, when it could be safely delivered. Mr Cairney was a man of that description whom success renders incau-

tious and improvident, and having done passing well on a small scale, thought he could do better if he enlarged his business. It was in vain his friend Duncan M'Groul, and Struan Robertson, strongly advised him to be content with his present good fortune; and many an excellent advice did Duncan give him upon the subject of despising small mercies, but all to no purpose; he would make a spoon or spoil a horn.

The scene of his operations was the old waste pit we formerly mentioned as suggested by Rough Struan, and he thought it was impossible ever any thing like a discovery could take place in such a retired situation. But there was one small error he made in his calculations; he forgot, that in enlarging his utensils, it was necessary to enlarge the number of men; and that, in all illicit transactions, the master is the servant, and therefore the fewer hands he employs the fewer he has to court and to trust. Ringan agreed with his father on this point, and

remonstrated so strongly, that Mr Cairney, in an unguarded moment, gave Ringan his leave, which Ringan took in such high dudgeon, that he never more would look near "the Wark."

"I'll no do you an ill turn, Mr Cairney," said Ringan, "after what's been between us, but I'm mista'en if ye dinna rue the day we parted mair than I'll do." And it happened exactly as Ringan had predicted.

Some of the new men, who had not any principle of that misnamed honour that binds rogues together, having quarreled with Mr Cairney on account of wages, gave information, and one evening down came a possey of the excise-men upon them, when they were full at work, and seized still, wash, worts, and a considerable quantity of spirits. The workmen, however, being acquainted with the various turns of the pit, and having contrived to get the lights extinguished, escaped

before they could be re-kindled. The officers were contented with destroying the wash, and carrying off the still and the spirits; and perhaps might on this, as on many similar occasions, have got the thanks of their superiors, but been out of pocket by their expedition, had not chance thrown in their way a prize of value sufficient to recompence them for their night's labour.

Mr Cairney, after his men had fled, remained hovering, like a perturbed spirit, over the wreck of all his hopes and expectations. One of the officers perceiving this, made an attempt to lay hold on him, on which he fled, and was as quickly pursued by several of the men. He took the road to Rough Struan's, and had run for nearly a mile, when he came to two carts loaded, and accompanied by a number of people; then, roaring out—"the gaugers! the gaugers!" he mingled with them. The carts contained the cargo of the Hazard, and were going to the farm of

Edenham-muir, to Struan's outhouses, attended by several sailors, and Stent Tiller.

The sailors were taken completely by surprise, and seeing only three men, they, without thinking, left the carts, and immediately gave chase. The excise-men in their turn took to flight, but they fell back upon their supplies, who, recollecting the late trick which had been played by the smugglers, had all come well armed, and prepared for attack or defence. The sailors were armed with cutlasses and bludgeons, but the others had the advantage of numbers and fire-arms. The scuffle was fierce, but short. The sailors, after severely wounding three of the excise-men, were forced to flee, leaving two of their own, also severely wounded, (one of whom was their leader), in the hands of their adversaries. The seizure of the carts was now a very easy thing, and they were marched to Rough Struan's, who received them in charge from very different con-

ductors than those he had expected. He, however, had the prudence to congratulate the gentlemen upon their gude luck, and to wonder whare they fell in wi' sic a prize; nor did he attempt to recognise either horse or cart, though they had left his own stable-yard a few hours before. But the supervisor, greatly to the mortification of Stent Tiller, recognised in him an old acquaintance, and sarcastically thanked him for his breakfast and sail.

“The chances of war,” was all Tiller’s reply; who was indeed rendered so weak by the loss of blood and fatigue, that the supervisor sent off Ringan express to Edinmouth for a surgeon, and Stent desired him to go to his uncle at the same time. Ringan set off with all speed, and returned early in the morning with Martin and Captain Thomson. When Martin had examined Stent’s head, he found the wounds were only flesh wounds; and having got them properly cleaned and dressed,

the Captain might have accompanied his friends home, had not the supervisor insisted on being favoured with his company to H——, the county-town, where he and his companion were safely lodged in jail, to await a precognition before the sheriff, for deforcing the King's officers in the discharge of their duty.

As this was a situation entirely novel to them all, and though Stent would not have dreaded a custom-house cutter, he was taken quite a-back at the thoughts of a trial and a judge. The exclamation of—"Bump ashore!" however, accompanied by a groan, were the only expressions of chagrin which escaped him; while Thomson cheered him with the hopes of being speedily "warped off."

Henry, though no lawyer, endeavoured to add his mite of consolation, by a very learned dissertation on the nature of evidence; which, although very well meant, was not very intelligible. And being

pressed for room, we omit it, excepting only to notice, that he suggested at the end the propriety of asking Mr Beaton's advice and assistance upon the occasion; which being assented to, he immediately went in search of that gentleman.

It was next day before Mr Beaton could proceed for H—— jail, to consult with its unfortunate inmates. That night the story was the sole topic of conversation in Edinmouth. Duncan M'Groul alone chewed the cud in secret, and mourned over the tyrannical power o' the Dominators. Enæas was loud in execrating the excise and the Hanoverians, but it was to the wife of his bosom that he poured out his complaints, after the company, especially the Gauger, had left the house. Duncan had real cause for his sorrow, and therefore endeavoured to conceal it. M'Bain's chagrin originated in sympathy for the sufferers, and hatred for the excise, in which the whole feelings of the town went

with him. Accordingly, he determined upon setting out next day to pay a visit to his friends in durance, and see if any thing could be done to help them.

Mr Beaton repeatedly visited the prisoners, and was present at the precognition, on which occasion he assisted in the examination of the witnesses, who, luckily for the prisoners, could not establish any share *they* had in the seized property, and the prosecution was dropped. M'Bain, however, in his visits of condolence, discovered, to his surprise, among the inmates, Saunders M'Naughton, whom he had so long sought for in vain; the Highlander having been lodged there, according to his own account of the matter, upon suspicion of debt. He communicated this circumstance immediately to Mr Beaton, who, knowing its importance to the Bruce family, set out instantly with the intelligence to Bowerbank. When he arrived there, he found Miss Bruce in close earnest

conversation with Mrs Comyns and Miss Stewart; they were talking about a plan for Miss Stewart's future support.

“ I think,” said Mr Beaton, “ I can assist you in your schemes. Miss Stewart has favoured me with her confidence; it is necessary that the circumstances of her mother's life and her own be known, to enable us to proceed in our endeavours to serve her; and I am persuaded neither Mrs Comyns nor Miss Bruce will feel uninterested listeners, if Miss Stewart will repeat to them the story she has told me. It is a painful duty; but allow me, Miss Stewart, to say it is necessary that you should give your friends the information I require.”

“ I submit to your directions,” answered Miss Stewart, and proceeded as follows.

CHAP. XII.

Thee I bespake, professed my strong desire
To lead a single solitary life,
And begged thy nobleness not to demand
Her for a wife, whose heart was dead to love.

HOME.

“MY grandfather, as you know, was possessed of considerable landed property in Scotland; and his attachment to the unfortunate family whose name he bore, involved him in their ruin. He went over to France, after their gallant efforts had been crushed, where his wife died, and left him with my mother and Charles, his only children. He was of the number of those who were personally connected with the Prince; that is, belonged to his suite. He had thus the good fortune to be introduced

at court, and was promoted in the French army, but had retired from actual service at the time when my mother became acquainted with Mr Comyns.

“ Though the circumstances of the family were far from being splendid, my mother was educated in a style more suitable to her father’s pride of rank, than his reduced fortune ; and notwithstanding they lived in a very recluse manner, her personal and acquired accomplishments, unfortunately for her, attracted the notice of one of the Princes of the Blood. The shocking pitch of depravity at which morals had arrived in France was such, that it was accounted no disgrace in noble families, who were in low circumstances, to rank one of their females, a daughter or sister, among the *chere ami’s* of a prince. Nay, you will hardly believe it, some even courted that infamous distinction.

“ My grandfather had brought with him the high sense of female honour and dig-

nity which distinguishes his native country ; and my mother, though expensively, had been privately and virtuously educated. Both would have indignantly spurned at any alliance, however exalted, which must have been purchased by self-degradation ; any attention from such a quarter was therefore to be suspected. Her father was too well acquainted with their nature, to consider them otherwise than as a disgrace ; and she was too fond of her father, to be pleased with what she saw gave him pain. But her brother, who was educated in the military school, from under the eye of his father, imbibed early the libertine principles of those with whom he associated ; and what was begun at school, was completed in the army. His father's interest was such at the time my uncle was of sufficient age, that he easily procured him a commission in the French service.

“ I am not acquainted with the steps by

which he rose, but he very soon attained the rank of captain in one of the household regiments, and here became acquainted with the Prince de —, who was colonel in the army, from whom he received the most marked attention ; and his Royal Highness even condescended to become an occasional visitor in my grandfather's, who at that time had a lodging in Paris. The object of attraction could not long be concealed, nor could my mother's character have long remained pure. So situated, the visits of the Prince had already been noticed, and she had been even congratulated upon her good fortune, when her pride took the alarm, and she became anxious to get rid of her royal admirer. An opportunity was soon offered, which she urged her father eagerly to seize.

“ Charles's expences had increased with his advancement, and his father, who was proud of him, (for he had all the exterior of a gentleman), was not inclined to curb

him in his expence, and answered all his demands to an extent beyond perhaps what prudence would have approved or his income could have afforded, had he not at the same time diminished his own expenditure. Though extremely anxious that both his children should attain that *grade* in society to which he thought them entitled, he thought there was less danger in a young man's being pushed forward, than in exposing a lovely unportioned girl to the seductions of the dissolute capital; he was, besides, himself a man whose habits did not at all coincide with those of the noble. When he mentioned to my mother the necessity he was under of living more frugally, she proposed that he instantly should retire from Paris, and take a small villa at St Germain's, where he would not be exposed to any unnecessary expence. This resolution was strengthened by an old friend of his having an unoccupied hotel in St Germain's, which, on

hearing of their determinations to quit the metropolis, he offered them, along with a garden, at a very moderate rent. My mother was fond of flowers, reading, and music. Her father liked gardening, and the select society of a few who, like himself, sought repose in age, after the vicissitudes of youth, and endeavoured to console themselves for the loss of their country, by often recalling to the recollection of each other the scenes of their distant hills, and singing their native songs in a strange land. All these were to be found in St Germain's, and the proposal was accepted with pleasure. Thither they went, and time ran rapidly away in a serene even course, interrupted only by a very short trip to Paris, and that not frequently, or an excursion to some of the neighbouring villages. In this situation they were pleased with each other,—tranquil—happy, when Mr Comyns became acquainted with them. The short painful story of their loves you

have heard. It was among the first subjects with which I was familiar. When I was quite an infant, my mother would weep over me for hours, and involuntarily sigh out a name which she wished and strove in vain to forget. I instinctively caught it. At first she sometimes checked, but afterwards she felt a pleasure in hearing me repeat—"Comyns."

"My uncle, while they were enjoying the narrow income to which they restricted themselves for his sake, got involved in a train of dissipation, which required resources beyond what the united income of his pay and his father's allowances could afford. It would be painful in me to repeat all the instances of extravagance and folly which I have heard of him; but that to which my mother owed her misfortunes I cannot conceal, because it accounts for the rapidity with which he involved all his relations in his own destruction,—broke off the marriage of Mr Comyns

with his sister, and drove his old father from his retreat, and himself to find a grave in the wilds of America. The Prince de —, who pretended great friendship for him, took every opportunity of shewing his kindness, by leading him into parties of pleasure, and introducing him to the most fashionable *beaux esprits*, till his whole property being in arrears, he was reduced to depend upon gaming for supporting himself. The life of a gamester is a constant series of uncertain elevations and depressions,—his was such ; and often, when at low ebb, he was under the necessity of borrowing from his friend ; and this his Royal Highness encouraged, as a means to accomplish his end.”

“ Of all the evils of dissipation,” said Mrs Comyns, “ the total shipwreck of principle is the most to be deplored. Few, few can resist taking advantage of the necessities of their friends ; and fewer still are they who, when reduced to shifts to

supply fictitious wants, are able to hold fast their integrity."

"That," continued Miss Stewart, "was fully exemplified in the case of my uncle and the Prince. He hoped to make his necessities the means by which he should obtain possession of his sister; and the brother had actually consented to assist in the machinations upon that sister, at the time when Mr Comyns became acquainted with her. The proposals, it is true, were honourable, so far as they went, because no other dared have been thought of. But the veil was easily seen through, and my uncle was too well acquainted with the French gentry, to be the dupe of so shallow an artifice; and his conduct to my mother afterwards, showed plainly that no motives of regard, either for her ease or his own honour, *true honour* I mean, would have restrained him from proceeding to the most unwarrantable lengths. The rapid progress which Mr Comyns made in my mother's

affections, and his honourable suit being approved of by my grandfather, did not however allow him time to mature his plan; and notwithstanding he had pledged himself to the Prince, he never could find an opportunity to be serviceable to him in this respect, to the extent his patron expected. All his hints being lost upon his father, who repeatedly checked him when he introduced the merits of the Prince, the favours he had received from him, the respect his Royal Highness had for him, and the affection he had expressed for Maria. He was still farther from his purpose when he spoke to his sister; she heard all he said with the utmost indifference, and rallied him with great vivacity when he attempted to amuse her with any of his fine airy schemes of greatness which would result from the friendship of the Prince.

“The rumour of Mary Stewart being on the eve of marriage, soon reached the Prince, for Mr Comyns’s attentions were

too marked to be misunderstood, and he insisted upon knowing from her brother how she had received his proposals, (for, after she and her father had retired to St Germain's, he never visited them, waiting till his scheme with Charles had opened the way). It was impossible to deceive him, or to deny how matters stood, and Charles was obliged to inform him of his want of success. This disappointment, though conveyed to him in the most soothing manner, and with expressions of the deepest regret by my uncle, who felt the greatest chagrin at having his own prospects overcast by this unlucky circumstance, sunk deep in the heart of the Prince, who felt his vanity severely wounded on the occasion. He received the intelligence with apparent coolness, and even affected to comfort Charles, who, with unaffected vexation, expressed how much he was grieved at missing so favourable an opportunity for gratifying his

friend ; but the wound rankled, and he determined on revenge. They were both deep players, but they belonged to different societies ; and the Prince, on being informed, a few days after, that the club to which my uncle belonged had suffered severely, called upon him, and, with some expressions of regret for the bad run his club had had, said that he needed a pretty considerable sum, and requested that Charles would oblige him by returning what he had lent him. Charles, who saw his intention, and felt piqued, answered him somewhat haughtily, which the other with sneering courtesy retorted, by telling him, if he had not so much past him, he could wait till he sent to his Bankers.

For once the Prince was misinformed ; the party with whom my uncle had been connected had had an uncommon good run, as they call it ; and with an air of *hauteur*, he went to his *escrutoire*, and bringing out what was more than sufficient to satis-

fy the demand, triumphantly told the Prince, that he could even afford to give *him* a little supply if he wanted it. The Prince perceiving that he had failed at this time, was quite charmed to find the report unfounded, and might afterwards perhaps avail himself of Captain Stewart's kindness ; but at present he begged to decline that honour, not being so very much pressed ; though he should have been happy, had he been on such a footing with the Stewart family (as he once hoped he would have been) as should have given him a right to request such a favour ; and hoped that Captain Stewart would, as formerly, have no delicacy in using his purse, for this demand, being unexpected, had only occasioned him a momentary push.

A number of protestations and offers of service, equally sincere, and equally well understood on both sides, passed between these loving associates, and they separated, my uncle wishing to make up the breach,

and his royal companion ruminating on the best means of wreaking his vengeance, now whetted to double keenness by the failure of this first attempt, both on him and the object of his desire. Could my uncle have persuaded himself to retrench, and give up a mode of living so far beyond all reasonable bounds, he might have—but I need not say what might have been done. He could not face the ridicule of his companions; he could not command the courage to break off his habits,—he fell before the superior fortune of his more powerful adversary. An accident put him in his power, and he made him feel the full effects of his wrath.

I need not repeat what you know; the outline in Dr Bourne's letter is tolerably correct, but there was one aggravation which he did not know. Previous to my uncle's coming to Mr Comyns's lodgings, the Prince had proposed to drop all his claims, provided my uncle would prevent

his sister's marriage. This he knew to be impossible ; and as neither excuse nor delay would be heard of by the Prince, the outrageous scene followed, and the family fled from France. The Prince being not only of the Blood-Royal, but my uncle's superior officer, he would have had him tried by a court-martial, had he remained. He durst not tell my grandfather the real story of his affair with Mr Comyns."

" But pray, my dear," said Mrs Comyns, interrupting her, " do you know by what means he prevailed on your grandfather so hastily to adopt the most injurious falsehoods against a young man who must have stood high in his opinion ; and who, at the same time, must likewise have had a very powerful advocate in your mother."

" That I cannot pretend to explain," replied Miss Stewart. " All I know is, such is the fact, as it was stated to me many years ago by an old domestic. My mother

never willingly alluded to this part of her story. Indeed, the greater part she told me was in some way accidentally brought out in the course of conversation ; I never heard the whole connectedly. I recollect, early one morning,—that morning we left my father's house, I was then about five years of age, and her bed-fellow, she awoke me to dress me. I was fretful at being awakened so soon. To please me, she said, if I wouldn't cry, she would make me a fine holiday Miss, and I should have my new frock, (it was white, trimmed with black), and a walk with her. All the while, as she dressed me, she sighed so deeply, that, young as I was, I could not help observing it, and asked if she was sorry for giving me a holiday ? When I was dressed, she filled my little lap with flowers, and took me along with her to my grandfather's grave. She strewed some upon the turf, and sat down and wept bitterly, while I scattered the rest around.

Little incidents such as that, which I understood not at the time, but remembered afterwards, made me curious, as I grew up, to learn the history of my parents; and my questions would often give rise to conversations, in which I learned all I know of their story.

“ But to proceed. My mother, when informed that she must think no more of Mr Comyns, and prepare to leave France immediately, was so wholly over-powered, that she obeyed almost without knowing what she did. To be whirled at once from the certainty of happiness, as she thought, to the extremity of wretchedness, without passing through any of the intermediate stages by which such a descent is softened, stupified her faculties; nor was it till some time after the first shock was over, that she felt all the extent of her calamity. The time allowed for preparation was so short, and she was left so little by herself, that she with difficulty

stole from her sleep time to write the first letter. At the village where they stopped, and from which I observe she had written her last, she was seized with a fever, and continued long very ill. At one time her life was despaired of, and she must have died, had it not been for the affectionate attention of an old servant of her mother's, who had been their companion in exile, and her nurse in affliction.

“ Charles, who dreaded being carried back to Paris in disgrace, sought refuge in America ; and, some years afterwards, was killed fighting against the House of Hanover. He left my mother while she lay in a state of insensibility ; and had the cruelty to accept of a part of the pittance his father had brought with him, the sole support of my mother and himself, in order to enable him to get into some respectable situation in the rebel army, as it was then styled.

“ The illness of my mother was followed by that of her father ; and for several

months she watched his bed, daily expecting that every day would be his last, and hoping that her own was at no great distance. He recovered slowly, but his memory was gone ; and when he had regained a little strength of body, he exhibited the melancholy ruins of his former self,—“ Meagre and pale, the ghost of what he was.” His reason was not estranged ; he recollected distinctly, and talked with coherence of every thing which had happened previous to his last misfortune, but of it his ideas were indistinct ; and the occurrences of the day passed over him like objects before a mirror, without leaving any lasting impression. Ten times a-day he would ask the same questions, “ Where is Charles ? Where is Mr Comyns ? I don’t think I’ve seen him lately ? Where are we ? When shall we get back to Paris ?” And then, when answered, he would sometimes reply, “ Ay, true ! that’s strange ! I forgot that I had

asked before; but my memory's much failed of late."

If protracted existence had been to my mother any blessing, the imbecillity of my grandfather in some degree contributed to this. The exertions she used to amuse and divert his attention, prevented her mind from preying upon itself; and she acquired a degree of strength of body, and serenity of mind, in performing this filial duty, which astonished her. But there was one evil, which was every day approaching with accelerated rapidity, which she saw no means of avoiding, and with which she was unprepared to combat,—Poverty. The utmost frugality could no longer eke out the remnants of their little store. She had but few trinkets, her friends were at a distance, and want was at hand. She could forego the elegancies of life, for she had never over-valued them; she could consent even to abridge its comforts, for disappointment had sickened her heart;

but to encounter absolute want, and with a father too, this was a trial! her soul sunk within her!

Despair sometimes performs the office of hope; it rouses to exertions, such as any common excitement would never make a man dream of. An English *charge d'affaires*, Mr B——, was passing through the village, on his way to Paris; he was only to stop a few hours; to him she resolved to apply. Though naturally one of the most timid of women, she introduced herself to him, and told her simple melancholy tale. Her appearance at once interested him in her favour, and he went with her to the small house where she lodged with her father. In the course of conversation respecting Scotland, and my grandfather's family, he discovered that his own wife, Mr Hay's maternal aunt, was, by a second marriage, also related to my mother. This was an additional inducement to Mr B—— to endeavour to as-

sist them ; and, with a paternal solicitude, he entered into all my mother's anxieties. The only thing he could do to help them, in this emergency, was to afford them present pecuniary aid, and promise to use his endeavours to procure some more permanent supply.

“ When he took his departure, he made my mother promise to renew her application to him, when she should again be reduced to any extremity ; and recommended her to watch over her father's returning convalescence in the village where they were, and upon no account to alter her place of residence, without making him acquainted with the change. These arrangements were all completed without my grandfather's knowledge. Mr B——, in doing good, had the uncommon felicity of doing it delicately. He considered the feelings of others, without ranting about the fineness of his own. “ When your father gets better,” said he to my mother, as he bade

her farewell, “ we shall settle accounts ; take care of his health, and let nothing disturb you. My family follow me in a few days ; I shall perhaps use the freedom of desiring them to ask after your welfare as they pass.”

“ The old man recovered amazingly. But although he regained his strength, his mind never returned to its former tone,—to his dying hour there was always a feebleness about it. When, however, he was able in some measure to look after his affairs, the destitute state of his daughter was his first object of concern. “ Should I die, what will become of my girl? When I am gone, who will care for her?” And then he would bitterly accuse himself for ever leaving Scotland ; and blame Comyns, and every body, but his own children. When my mother, in order to assuage his regrets, told him of the kindness of Mr B——, and of his promise, he became more composed, and they began to consult about

their future procedure. He was particularly anxious that he might get himself rid of the weight of obligation under which Mr B—— had laid him. He had brought with him all the money he could command, but had left at St Germain's the moveables, which he could not carry with him, and which he had not time to dispose of. These he had overlooked in his settlement with Mr Cheveneux; and he now thought that, if sold, they would enable him to discharge the obligation which he owed to Mr B——, and leave a small reversion, sufficient to support them till such time as he could get a proper representation of his case laid before the King, who, he had some hopes, would give him back his pension, when his situation was fairly understood; and especially as the principal offender, as he imagined, was out of Europe. This being determined on, he inclosed a letter for Mr Cheveneux, along with another from his daughter for Made-

moiselle, under cover to Mr B—— at Paris, instructing him to dispose of his property to the best advantage; and, after paying Mr B—— the sum he owed him, remit him the balance.

“ Mr B—— carried the letters himself to Mr Cheveneux, who made no secret of their contents. And as he had some pretty large transactions with that gentleman, he easily contrived to get him to remit a considerable sum, in such a manner as to supply the necessities of my grandfather, without hurting his pride. Mr Cheveneux being instructed to take all the merit of having made a very profitable sale of the trifling property committed to his disposal, which he did, and followed his instructions so completely, that, had his daughter, Mademoiselle, been equally cautious, it never would have been known by my mother that they were in the least indebted to Mr B—— in the affair. He had mentioned the memorial to Mr Cheve-

neux, but it was an affair in which he was sorry he could be of no service; he was so much indebted to the Prince, in the way of his money transactions, that he durst not run the risk of incurring his displeasure. Mr B——, though he could not appear in the business openly, endeavoured to try in private what he could do among his friends. But all his solicitations were in vain; and he wrote to my mother, to try and prevail upon my grandfather to return to Paris, and engage some of his old friends to interest themselves with the ministry, for at that time he found the British influence much on the decline.

“ Mr B——’s lady arrived at —— on the same day that the letter from her husband reached my mother. That lady had been greatly interested about her relations, by the account her husband had written her, and she was much prepossessed in their favour before she saw them. She had planned her travelling in such a manner,

that she left herself a spare day to spend with them ; and with a benevolent frankness, which knows no ceremony, she only waited a few moments at the inn, till they were apprised of her arrival, and then waited upon them. She told my mother, that although she came prepared to love them, she had not expected to see so interesting a couple as the two invalids. My mother was pale and thin, in consequence of her long indisposition ; and my grandfather had the remains of a noble countenance, and majestic figure, which misfortune, sickness, and age, had not been able completely to destroy. She was accompanied by two young girls, her whole family. My mother was then about nineteen, and her little cousins, for so Mrs B—— styled them, became, as is not uncommon with children, immediately and extravagantly fond of her, and she in return was as fond of them. When the proposal of her husband, that they, my grandfather and

mother, should return to Paris, was mentioned, she strongly urged their compliance; and she suggested the idea to my mother, that as, in the course of nature, her father could not live long, she might, by going along with them, find a refuge among her friends in England; and, in the interval, she would more than recompense them, by taking charge of the two young ladies, and thus save her from what she dreaded with true British feeling, the introduction of an impertinent Parisian governess into her family.

“ This to my mother would have been an agreeable arrangement. Her heart leaped at the idea of visiting the island where her beloved George was; and there perhaps he might meet her, or there, if he remained the same, he might at least be convinced that she was not to blame in the unfortunate rupture. She again would enjoy his good opinion—his pity—his love. She was not, however, suffered long

to enjoy these anticipations. Her father, in the most decided manner, negatived the proposal. He could not brook the thought of living a dependant on the bounty of distant relations. He therefore resolved to go to Italy, and if he was to owe his subsistence to any person, he chose rather to number himself among the pensioners of the House in whose cause he had lost his all, and on whom he had a claim, than go to his own country, and acknowledge the rights of aliens to the crown of his native princes. He therefore firmly, but politely, declined the offer. He said, as he had outlived the greater number of his earlier friends, he could hope for nothing from his personal exertions in Paris, and he had completely made up his mind with regard to visiting Britain, where, he declared, he would never set his foot, till the legitimate princes were restored. He expressed his high sense of the obligations he was under to Mr B——, and said he should ever

remember with gratitude his kindness, which he regretted he had no prospect of ever repaying.

“ Mrs B—— remained another day, in the hope of being able to induce him to alter his determination, but in vain, and took leave with reluctance, repeatedly charging my mother to consider her as a near relation, and her house as an asylum, which should be always at her service, in case of an event, which, however painful to anticipate, did not appear at any great distance.

“ My grandfather and mother set out in about a month after for Italy, and arrived at Rome by short and easy stages. On application to his Eminence the Cardinal, he was recognised, and for several years was supported by his bounty. His house was the resort of all the Scotch exiles; and indeed few of his countrymen, who visited that celebrated city, failed to procure admission into the small conversaziones occa-

sionally held at Il Penseroso, the name by which they distinguished my grandfather's house, on account of the sedate grief of my mother. Among the visitors was one, a gentleman of family, from Scotland. He saw my mother, was struck with her appearance, professed love to her, and became her husband and my father. I dare not dwell on the particulars of the courtship, for I cannot describe the agony with which I have heard my mother mention her efforts to overcome her repugnance to the addresses of a harsh, solemn, forbidding, grim looking—but——”

“ I shall save you the rest,” said Mr Beaton. “ He was Ewan Cameron, the uncle of your friend Miss Ann Cameron Bruce.”

The astonishment of Miss Bruce, at finding in Miss Stewart so near a relation, may be easily imagined ; and it was with the truest and most heart-felt delight she gave her her hand, particularly as she did not

know that in her she saw the heiress of more than one half of her father's landed property, and a claimant for considerably more ready money than he would be able to raise. We shall not attempt to give dramatic effect to a scene which was, in fact, upon the part of those who felt most exquisitely,—dumb shew; neither of the young ladies said much.

Mr Beaton, however, interrupted the pause, by stepping forward and taking Miss Stewart by the hand. "Allow me, Madam," said he, "to congratulate you upon the recovery of every paper which can tend to establish your claims to the right and title of Mary, daughter of Ewan Cameron. I met in the jail, when I went to see the smugglers, the man whom all parties have been so long in search of—Saunders Mac-Naughton, and from him I received the documents, which I have forwarded to your agent in Edinburgh; and, as soon as I possibly can, I mean to follow them my-

self, and shall be happy to be favoured with the commands of any of the ladies present to their friends in that city."

"This," said Mrs Comyns, "is news of too much importance to be withheld from Mr Hay."

"I intend waiting upon him before I set out," answered Mr Beaton; "and arranging with him and yourself our future mode of proceeding. Miss Stewart, I presume, will have no objections to put herself under our guidance, provided you, Madam, make a third in the councils."

"None in the world," replied Miss Stewart; "and I hope, as Mrs Comyns has been so kind hitherto, she will not refuse this good office."

"I shall always feel a pleasure in what can conduce to Miss Stewart's interest," answered the affectionate old lady.

As there was no time to be lost, Mr Beaton soon after took his leave of the ladies, and proceeded for Ila-hill, on pur-

pose to consult with Mr Hay, and appoint a meeting next day at Bowerbank, in order to receive his final instructions.

After he had gone, Miss Stewart briefly continued her story. Her father, she said, had separated from her mother, who, on the separation, returned to France, resumed her maiden name of Stewart, and, during his life, subsisted upon a small allowance she received from him. At his death she came over to England, in order to endeavour to procure from his friends the arrears of her annuity; and, remaining at London, sent Miss Stewart to Scotland, to endeavour, with Mr Hay's assistance, to get her affairs settled, and her rights asserted.

"I believe," said Mrs Comyns, "now that you know your opponent, your most successful advocate will be yourself."

Miss Stewart blushed, and made no reply.

"How I should like," said Miss Bruce,

taking her by the hand, and kissing her cheek, "if I could call you sister, instead of cousin. I know who will be happy, when he hears Miss Stewart is Mary Cameron."

CHAP. XIII.

I've ran my story through.

OTHELLO.

ACCORDING to appointment, Mr Beaton and Mr Hay were at Bowerbank early next day. The chief occupation of these gentlemen was to congratulate Miss Stewart on her prospects. The other matters were soon settled; Mr Beaton being fully empowered to act according to circumstances. Having received letters from Miss Bruce and Mrs Comyns to Captain Bruce, and promising speedily to return, he took leave, and set out for Edinburgh.

The gentleman who had been applied to

as the agent for Miss Cameron, was no other than the individual Mr Cousland, who acted as Mrs Cameron Bruce's man of business. Upon him Mr Beaton waited the moment he arrived, in order to inform him of some particulars which he thought it of importance to him to know, especially as he thought they might shorten law proceedings. These were what our readers will easily have anticipated, the attachment of Captain Bruce to a Miss Cameron, *alias* Miss Stewart, and her mutual attachment to him.

“If that be the case,” said Mr Cousland, after Mr Beaton had finished his story, “I think we shall be able to disappoint Mr Wheedle's expectations upon the estates more easily than I had anticipated; for, what with the assistance he receives from that Prince of Improvers, Langline, I was afraid it would have been a difficult matter otherwise to have prevented his

coming in for a slice of the fragments. I wrote him," continued Cousland, "the instant I had your papers, informing him of this; and I suppose, in consequence, he and old Mr Bruce will have a quarrel,—one of those few quarrels I should like to promote. I would, therefore, not inform him of the manner in which we propose to extricate him, till he has fairly quarrelled with his two friends, which he must speedily and heartily do, when he sees how much he has been duped by them; but, to prevent accidents, the Captain must be informed, lest he be dragged into any deed, which could not afterwards be so well got rid of."

"I will wait upon him," said Beaton, "as an old acquaintance."

And, leaving Mr Cousland, he was introduced to Captain Bruce, as mentioned in our ninth chapter. When left alone together, as therein recorded, Mr Beaton

told him the object of his visit, delivering at the same time the letters from Mrs Comyns and his sister. These letters left him no reason to doubt of the continuance of his cousin's affection; and Mr Beaton's mysterious meetings now were also explained. He was therefore at ease to enter into the consideration of the state of the other affairs; and, leaving a note for his father, he accompanied Mr Beaton straightway to Mr Cousland's. He found Mr Cousland every way different from Mr Wheedle; ingenuous and frank, they entered upon business in a moment. The Captain told him that all he wanted was a little delay, and he hoped that some *amicable* arrangement might be made with his client. Mr Cousland answered with a smile, that although it was rather against his interest, yet he certainly would not object.

It is almost needless to inform the

reader of what he must have already anticipated, that the union of the two cousins speedily followed this eclaireissement.

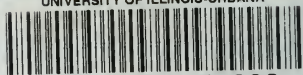
Mr Cousland, who had no such horror at examining long lawyers accounts, soon disentangled the intricacies in those of Wheedle, and that in such a manner as wholly broke up the connection with that gentleman and the family of the Bruces, to the infinite satisfaction of the lady, and the relief of her husband, who only regretted that his improvements were stopped before they had been completed, as Langline, whose accounts were also *squared*, found he could not undertake to carry them on at the prices Mr Cousland would consent to give.

Our acquaintances at Edinmouth, after their late disaster, left to other hands the trade of smuggling. Duncan said he was turnin' owre auld, and Stent Tiller, after the Lugger was sold, sailed Captain of the

Adventure, in place of his uncle, who retired from the service. Henry Martin, by the assistance of his friend Ainslie, and Captain Bruce, having been enabled to resume his studies, took his diploma, and thanked God he had done with THE SMUGGLERS.

FINIS.

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